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LANDSCAPING HISPANIOLA MOREAU DE SAINT-MÉRY'S BORDER POLITICS

A few days after the Haitian earthquake of January 12, 2010, Sonia Marmolejos, a young Dominican woman who was in the Darío Contreras Hospital of Santo Domingo with her newborn daughter, decided to breastfeed three Haitian children who had been admitted there after the disaster. They were wounded, hungry, and dehydrated, so Sonia Marmolejos acted on impulse and she did not expect to receive any special recognition for her generous gesture. The government of the Dominican Republic capitalized on this story, defined Sonia Marmolejos as a heroine, and used her actions as a metaphor to illustrate the charitable response of the country toward neighboring Haiti.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola and a history of colonialism which, however, has conjugated itself in very different ways. Officially under Spanish rule since 1493, the island was mostly left unpopulated for three-quarters of a century. In 1625 the French started to occupy parts of it (mainly in the north) and until the official recognition of the French colony of Saint-Domingue in 1777, they constantly pushed forward their unofficial borders, while the Spanish carried out punitive raids to eradicate the French presence. On the Spanish side, the economy was mainly livestock-based but the French developed an impressive network of plantations which relied on the constant import of enslaved labor from Africa. Saint-Domingue soon became the richest and most profitable colony of the Antilles until 1791, when a formidable slave revolt shook its foundations and had momentous repercussions throughout the island. Hispaniola became a war zone: the French, Spanish, English, and rebel armies forged and broke alliances and alternatively secured and lost portions of territory. In 1804, the formerly enslaved insurgents declared their independence from France and the colony of Saint-Domingue became the Republic of Haiti. The Black Jacobins and their successors repeatedly tried to export the values of their revolution to the Spanish part of the island and in 1822 the Haitian president Jean-Pierre Boyer annexed the former Spanish colony of Santo Domingo. The Haitian occupation of Santo Domingo lasted twenty years, until 1844. The Haitian

government, however, did not officially recognize the independence of the formerly Spanish part until 1855 and its dream of unification ended in 1856, when the Haitians were defeated by the Hispanic army. Dominican nationalistic discourses insist, however, that the Haitian threat was (is) far from over and that since 1856 the Haitians simply “adopted a new plan; peaceful penetration [whereby] a constant flux of immigrants crosses the frontier every day” trying to escape poverty (Sanchez Ventura 2006 in Piantini 2001:16). For complex reasons which include the “reparation” that, in 1825, Haiti was required to pay to France in order to be recognized as a sovereign nation by the international community,¹ the former affluent French colony of Saint-Domingue, the Pearl of the Antilles, has become an extremely impoverished nation, and it is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The number of Haitian immigrants present in the Dominican Republic is difficult to establish but negative attitudes toward them have always been widespread and prove difficult to eradicate. After the 2010 Haitian earthquake, prejudice and discrimination have not really disappeared even though the Dominican Republic has managed to change its international reputation: formerly considered a country where Haitian immigrant workers were denied their human rights, it is now seen as Haiti’s “Good Samaritan” (Wooding 2010:5-7). Yet, the spontaneous behavior of Sonia Marmolejos, who has publicly declared that she does not differentiate between Haitians and Dominicans, is in sharp contrast with the official reaction by her government which awarded her the Grado de Caballero in the Mérito de Duarte, Sánchez y Mella for helping *Haitian* children (Rodriguez 2011:83-87).² In other words, while Marmolejos’s gesture implicitly erases the geopolitical border and the mental barriers which have divided the island of Hispaniola since colonial times, the Dominican government’s response subtly, but forcefully, reinstates them.

This sketchy chronology of historical relations and the anecdote of Sonia Marmolejos foreground the continuities and discontinuities, ruptures and synergies that characterize and have characterized the relations between the two nations present on this island. Deep tensions, contradictory dynamics, and interactions engendered by the presence of an international border in Hispaniola are also highlighted in the work of Médéric Louis Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry which concerns itself with pre-revolutionary French Saint-Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo. A prominent member of the white Creole elite born in Martinique in 1750, Saint-Méry is the author of a monumental work which set out to describe Hispaniola in its

1. The last instalment was paid in 1922.

2. Ironically, in 1844 Pablo Duarte, Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, and Matías Ramón Mella, the so-called *Padres de la Patria*, were the leaders of the movement which led to the Dominican Republic’s independence from Haitian rule, and the Dominicans still celebrate February 27, 1844 as their Independence Day.

entirety but within the framework of its geopolitical colonial division. The *Description topographique et politique de la partie espagnole de l'Isle Saint-Domingue* published in Philadelphia in 1796 was followed, a year later, by the *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'Isle Saint-Domingue*.³ With its neat twofold division, Saint-Méry's work is organized in a way that invites readers to take for granted the partition of the island between Spain and France and betrays Saint-Méry's determination to contribute to the consolidation of what Richard Muir would call a "vertical interface." "International boundaries," Muir contends, "[are] located at the interfaces between adjacent ... territories [and] sovereignties [which] intersect the surface of the earth"; according to Muir, "as vertical interfaces, such boundaries have no horizontal extent" (Muir 1975:119). Saint-Méry's *Description of the partie française* has received more attention from historians and scholars, particularly because it contains his well-known detailed racial taxonomies and offers precious information on pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. What matters here, however, is that back in the eighteenth century, Saint-Méry had realized that, in order to be fully understood, the island of Hispaniola had to be approached in its entirety. Moreover, both Saint-Méry's *Descriptions*, whilst being ultimately committed to the (re)inscription of the colonial frontier, intriguingly oscillate between its erasure and its reinforcement. In other words, as determined as he might have been to contribute to the consolidation of the colonial border which, at the time of writing had only very recently been officially sanc-

3. In April 2010, I consulted the manuscript of the two volumes of the *Description de la partie espagnole* in the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence (ms F³ 102-3). The pages of the manuscript are divided in two columns, one of which contains additions or amendments presumably included during revisions. With regards to content, the manuscript is not dramatically different from the version which was printed in Philadelphia so, in this paper, I will be referring to the printed version pointing out significant discrepancies from the manuscript when necessary. In the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer I also found the manuscript of the English translation of the *Description de la partie espagnole* (2 vols – ms F³ 104-5) which was published immediately after the French edition and which had not yet been catalogued (the *Description de la partie espagnole* erroneously appeared to be in 4 volumes and catalogued as ms F³ 102-5). The *Description de la partie espagnole* was translated by William Cobbett but Saint-Méry played an active role in the translation as testified by the many letters the two exchanged and which are included in the first volume of the manuscript. Here I will be referring to this translation unless otherwise specified. The translation presents no division into columns but its pages are not always consistently numbered – Volume I is especially erratic. In my references I will be giving the page number or letter on the manuscript accompanied by the page number of the 1796 printed French edition. The manuscript of the English translation will be referred to as ms, vol. I or vol. II while the *Description de la partie espagnole* will be referred to as PE, vol. I or vol. II. Quotations from and references to the *Description de la partie française* will be referred to as PF, vol. I or vol. II and in this case all translations into English are mine.

tioned, Saint-Méry also reveals the existence of horizontal dimensions and dynamics which transcend and traverse this vertical interface.

In order to appreciate the nature and purpose of Saint-Méry's intervention it is vital to remember that the relationship between the two sides of Hispaniola had not only been characterized by antagonism but also by other kinds of interactions, mutual influences, and collaborative linkages. Contraband and illicit trade between the two parts of the island were an open secret; for a long time, the two colonies were prevented from trading with one another by their respective mother countries but did it all the same, out of necessity and mutual advantage. Santo Domingo's livestock economy depended in great part on the contraband trade with Saint-Domingue and, as we will see, gave rise to a different relationship between masters and slaves. Like leather and beef, slaves were bought and sold across the border both legally and illegally and the French did sometimes "borrow" them from the Spanish when they needed more workers (Matibag 2003:50, 58). Saint-Domingue's slaves also crossed the border of their own volition and with the active assistance and complicity of the Maroon communities (Fouchard 1981:276-78). They were constantly drawn to the Spanish side of the island by the enticing promises of the colonists and authorities who generally granted them freedom because for a long time they could not participate in the slave trade and did not have the financial resources to buy labor and develop a plantation economy (Silié 2007:141, 143). The relative proximity of the Spanish border has in fact been identified as one of the main causes of *marronage*, a major problem for French plantation owners (Matibag 2003:54; Fouchard 1981:274). These across-the-border trajectories and connections gave rise to alternative networks and created borderlands characterized by a horizontality which cut through and exploded the official vertical frontier. In the *Description de la partie française*, Saint-Méry identifies the troublesome Sierra de Bahoruco as a region unto itself, a borderland which did not really belong to either of the colonial powers. He refers in detail to the Bahoruco maroons' protracted defiance to colonial authority and to the intensification of their incursions from the Spanish side into the Saint-Domingue border region of Cul-de-Sac, Anses à Pitre, Fond Parisien, Croix-de-Bouquet, and Mirebalais throughout the eighteenth century. Saint-Méry also retraces the history of the Bahoruco region and explains how its topography and toponomastic had been deeply affected by anticolonial rebellions from a very early age. The Étang-Salé, he adds, was renamed Henriquille or Petit-Henry because it was the place where the sixteenth-century Indian rebel leader Enriquillo or cacique Henry met François de Barrio Nuovo who was on a peace-seeking mission on behalf of the Emperor Charles V.⁴ Moreover, as Saint-Méry continues,

the canton of Anses à Pitre still contains evidence of the precautions that the cacique took to avoid falling into the power of his enemy. At Anse-à-

4. PF, vol. II, p. 496.

Boeuf one can find a semicircular retrenchment about four and a half feet deep, attached to a mountain at each side ... All around there are caves full of human bones. Anse-à-Boeuf is connected with the Etang-Salé by a gorge which widens slightly at a point called Fond-Trélinguet and which runs to the Saint-Jean de la Croix-des-Bouquets district to connect the plain of Cul-de-Sac to Fond-Parisien. This connection is described by several hunters and was verified no longer than twenty-five years ago.⁵

For more than eighty-five years, Saint-Méry writes, the region in question was occupied by the maroons who regarded it as their own domain⁶ and who continued to adapt indigenous caves to their strategic needs well into the nineteenth century.

Saint-Méry's admirably detailed volumes on Hispaniola were the product of eighteen years of work⁷ during which he benefited from direct experience in the two colonies, access to both local archives (private and public), and documents relevant to the colonial administration to be found in Europe. An advocate for more economic and political autonomy for the colony, Saint-Méry actively participated in the French Revolution and for a short period he was even in charge of the Bastille after July 14. However, he held moderate pro-slavery and pro-monarchic views which obliged him to abandon the ranks of the Reformers and flee France in 1793. Saint-Méry then moved to Philadelphia where he opened a publishing house and a bookshop and where he published both his *Descriptions*. The two volumes devoted to the Spanish side were the first to be printed not as Saint-Méry's choice but as the result of the cession of Spanish Santo Domingo to France in 1795. This geopolitical fact, Saint-Méry explains, made him think that "the publication of the description of the Spanish part of that Isle, would be interesting to the public."⁸ Saint-Méry further discusses the possible reasons behind this interest: knowing more about Santo Domingo, the first American colony, is helpful to better understand what he calls "the European genius."⁹ More poignantly, since the cession had dismantled the colonial administrative system he so carefully and minutely describes, his work is precious in that it gives his readers a precise sense of what had been destroyed.¹⁰ This declaration of purpose sustains both his *Descriptions* which he prefaces by informing his readers that he deliberately omitted to report any changes related to or derived from 1789.¹¹ In the very title of the volume devoted to the French side, he

5. PF, vol. II, pp. 496-97.

6. PF, vol. II, p. 497.

7. Ms, vol. I, p. B; PE, vol. I, p. 2.

8. Ms, vol. I, p. D; PE, vol. I, p. 4.

9. Ms, vol. I, p. E; PE, vol. I, p. 5.

10. Ms, vol. I, p. EF; PE, vol. I, pp. 5-6.

11. Of course this is not entirely true. For example, the 2004 reproduction of the manuscript of *Description de la partie française* includes all the passages that Saint-Méry

indicates that his analysis covers the status quo up to October 18, 1789, significantly, only thirteen days after Louis XVI assented to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and four days before the National Assembly accepted the petition of rights of “free citizens of color” from Saint-Domingue. In other words, the text is suspended *before* the moment in which Enlightenment emancipationism had what Saint-Méry considered lethal consequences for the colonial social and racial structure.

In the “Discours Préliminaire” of the first volume on the French side, Saint-Méry famously compares Saint-Domingue to the past civilizations of Greece and Rome¹² but, by and large, his nostalgia for the past is accompanied by a strong desire to shape the future, to “make” history, not just to report it:

But, & I cannot give up my hopes ... France might need some information to assist her in choosing what to do in order to turn Saint-Domingue once again into a profitable colony.¹³

As we will see, Saint-Méry’s projected future of further development and exploitation also had a spatial, not only a temporal, dimension which was nevertheless rife with anxieties and contradictions.

The *Description de la partie espagnole* begins with an *Abrégé historique*, or *Historical Summary*, which records, at length, the vicissitudes of the colonial border from 1630, date of the arrival of the French Buccaneers on the island of Tortue, to 1777, when the Treaty of Aranjuez between France and Spain (provisionally) finalized the frontier between the two colonies.¹⁴ From the Spanish perspective, the treaty of Aranjuez legitimized the occupation of their territory by French buccaneers and other outlaws – Saint-Méry calls them “Adventurers”¹⁵ – but in his unsurprisingly biased *Historical Summary*, Saint-Méry chronicles the progress of the French settlement on the island omitting the fact that they had actually occupied the Spanish colony illegally. According to the treaty, which the conscientious and cunning Saint-Méry appends to the *Historical Summary*,¹⁶ the border begins with the River

decided to eliminate in 1797. One can for example find an argument in support of a more “humane” form of slavery written in 1788 or 1789 which Saint-Méry later decided to suppress – (tome I, p. 46). Most of Saint-Méry’s amendments, however, are not as significant as this particular one.

12. PF, vol. I, p. viii.

13. PF, vol. I, pp. v-vi.

14. In the manuscript, the historical summary is to be found in the first volume and is numbered rather chaotically: i-xxiii; A-Z; Aa-Ss; xli-xlix; PE, vol. I, pp. i-xxij.

15. Ms, vol. I, p. i; PE, vol. I, p. i.

16. In the manuscript, the treatise is chaotically numbered and is to be found at K-xlviij; PE, vol. I, pp. xxij-xlviij.

d'Ajabon or Massacre in the north of the island and ends with the River Anses-à-Pitre or Pedernales in the south.¹⁷ The treaty also determines where the line of demarcation must be signposted on the territory by 221 pairs of stone pyramids bearing the inscription "France: Espana."¹⁸ In other words, before he begins to describe the two sides of the island, Saint-Méry wants to make sure that his readers appreciate the difference between a disordered *lived in* place (the product of the territorial conflicts between the two colonies and of across-the-border activities) and the order inherent in a *conceived* place (the two colonies as defined by the vertical interface). Yet, the fact that the treaty specifies that anyone caught destroying or tampering with the stone pyramids will be condemned to death and that both colonies should do everything in their power to discourage contraband is symptomatic of a widespread lack of trust in the effectiveness of a legally sanctioned vertical boundary.¹⁹ Saint-Méry includes the treaty and detailed information regarding the borderline only in the *Description de la partie espagnole* despite the fact that, arguably, they were relevant to both sides of the border. Its omission from the *Description de la partie française* was instrumental to the "naturalization" of the French presence on Hispaniola implicit in Saint-Méry's decision to mirror the newly officialized geopolitical division of the island (*partie française* and *partie espagnole*) in the textual organization of his work.

Saint-Méry's *Description de la partie espagnole* provides a picture of the political and religious structure of the Spanish side (i.e. mayors, archbishops), incorporates ethnographic material (i.e. "Character and manners of the Spanish Creoles") and tidily organizes his survey by administrative areas (i.e. "Bahoruco and its vicinity") and geographical features (i.e. "Mountains," "Plains," and "Rivers"). Similarly, his *Description de la partie française* contains topographic, ethnographic, and administrative information on the three different parts of the French colony (Partie du Nord, Partie de l'Ouest, and Partie du Sud) and it is also minutely organized parish by parish. Unsurprisingly, however, the "neutral" word *Description* is not the most appropriate to define Saint-Méry's encyclopedic work.

Saint-Méry's survey of the territory of the French colony incessantly celebrates the fact that it is punctuated by sugar plantations and other manufactures. For example, in the small border district of Maribarou (which belongs partly to the Parish of Fort Dauphine and partly to the Parish of Ouanaminthe

17. Owing its name to "ancient murderous acts reciprocally committed by the Buccaneers and the Spaniards in their disputes over the territory" (PF, vol. I, p. 108) the River Massacre still marks the Northern internal border of the island. In both *Descriptions* the River Massacre is also called Dajabon, d'Ajabon, Dahabon, or Daxabon (the spelling is unstable) after the small border town alongside which it runs.

18. PE, vol. I, p. xxviii; ms, vol. I, p. U.

19. PE, vol. I, p. xlv, xlvij.

in the *Partie du Nord*) Saint-Méry proudly counts twenty-seven sugar plantations – that is, five more than the ones active in the whole of Santo Domingo. In his meticulous depiction of the Spanish side of the border from Daxabon in the north to the *étangs* or ponds in the south,²⁰ Saint-Méry predominantly highlights the different conditions of the two colonies. In his description of the Baye de Mancenille on the northern coast of Hispaniola, for example, he observes that

the most striking circumstance and that perhaps which is the most proper to mark the character of the two nations is to see on the west side of the River Massacre, settlements where everything bespoke an active industry, and a degree of wealth that extends even to objects of luxury, while on the other side, all appears barren.²¹

Also further away from the border, the beauty of Santo Domingo is hardly ever contemplated for its own sake; more often than not, Saint-Méry's land-scaping turns into a criticism of the Spanish colonists' way of life:

The delighted eye sweeps around over the Cape Raphael, the Pointe-de-l'Epée, all the settlement of the immense plains de Seybo and Higüey, Santo Domingo and its environs, and finds no end of its variegated pleasures till it arrives at the east of the group of Cibao. In this extensive view there are a thousand spots which, for a time, charm the sight and withhold it from the general picture by a display of more picturesque and striking beauties. All is regular confusion and majestic simplicity ...

What sorrow must the beholder of all these riches feel when he considers, that nature has lavished them in vain. That they have served only to awaken the drowsy Spaniard a moment from his torpidity in order to sink the unhappy Indians to the grave in laboring to satisfy his guilty avarice, his thirst for gold, to him superior to all but in indolence.²²

This waste of resources is widespread. In the French side one can find 793 *sucreries*, 3,150 *indigoteries*, 789 *cotonneries*, and 3,117 *cafeteries*,²³ but Spanish Santo Domingo, despite being much larger than its French counter-

20. Ms, vol. I, pp. 243-83; PE, vol. I, pp. 252-82.

21. Ms, vol. I, pp. 10-11; PE, vol. I, pp. 206-7.

22. Ms, vol. I, pp. 242-43; PE, vol. I, pp. 154-55. There is a mistake in the translation because the French original refers to the west and not to the east of the group of Cibao. In the manuscript of the French version, the second part of this quotation where Spanish indolence, torpidity, guilty avarice, and thirst for gold are emphasized, appears in the column for revisions and additions (vol. I, 125 Verso).

23. PF, vol. I, p. 100.

part, only counts 22 sugar manufactures of any consequence; coffee, cotton, and cocoa are grown just to meet the need of the locals, and indigo, which used to be cultivated, only grows spontaneously.²⁴ Many of the pastures of Santo Domingo are infested by “lineonal,” “mirtle,” “wild basilick,” and other plants not suitable for the subsistence of livestock²⁵ and the mines of the Spanish side are rich but have not been exploited.²⁶ Overall, Saint-Méry concludes, the Spanish colony is able to survive only because of its licit and illicit trade with the French side.²⁷

Spanish indolence, however, is not just a waste of resources but also a dangerous habit: as we have seen, Saint-Méry is deeply concerned about the fertile border area of the Bahoruco which, sadly neglected by the Spanish, has in fact become the “place of refuge of the fugitive Spanish and French negroes.”²⁸ Once again, the author remarks how one could instead advantageously mine gold there²⁹ and cultivate different crops including indigo, cotton, tobacco, coffee, and, obviously, sugar.³⁰ More precisely, he claims, one could establish more than two hundred and fifty sugar manufactures in the area.³¹ All in all, Saint-Méry infers that the French (but he prudently uses passive sentences or the pronoun *on* all along) would make better use of the Spanish colony’s resources. For instance, he claims that Azua’s “territory might certainly have four hundred sugar plantations and furnish employment for 80,000 negroes,” and hypothesizes that “it would be an easy matter to establish in the plain, between Santo Domingo and Pointe-de-l’Épée, many hundreds of sugar plantations.”³²

The island is therefore re-imagined transformed and homogenized into an extended version of Saint-Domingue with one sugar plantations after the other. In order to do so, Saint-Méry’s gaze substitutes the concrete and unruly reality of “place” with an abstract homogenous “space” in which those dissimilarities which ironically presuppose the existence of a vertical border between

24. Ms, vol. I, p. 60; PE, vol. I, pp. 63-64.

25. Ms, vol. I, p. 275; PE, vol. I, p. 275.

26. See, for example, ms, vol. I, p. 150; PE, vol. I, pp. 109; ms, vol. I, pp. 240-41; PE, vol. I, pp. 153-54.

27. See, for example, ms, vol. I, p. 220 and pp. 272, 273, 274 ; PE, vol. I, p. 142 and pp. 272, 273, 274 and ms, vol. II, p. 99; PE, vol. II, p. 99.

28. Ms, vol. I, p. 88; PE, vol. I, p. 80.

29. Ms, vol. I, p. 88; PE, vol. I, p. 80.

30. Ms, vol. I, p. 95; PE, vol. I, p. 83.

31. Ms, vol. I, pp. 94-95; PE, vol. I, p. 83.

32. Ms, vol. I, p. 124; PE, vol. I, p. 97, and ms, vol. I, p. 264; PE, vol. I, p. 167. In the “Table générale des matières contenues dans cet ouvrage,” under “Sucrieries,” Saint-Méry also lists: “Those which already are in the plain of Santo Domingo and the ones one could add to them” and “Those one could put in the plain of La Vega”), PE, vol. II, p. 305. The “Table générale des matières” is not in the manuscript of the English translation so the above translations are mine.

the two sides of the island and which, as we will see, he explores in detail in his oeuvre, are conveniently neutralized. The symbolic nature of the borderland is especially altered by Saint-Méry's projections: under the reader's eyes, the Bahoruco, a place qualified by underground and clandestine indigenous and black resistance, is transmuted into an ordered network of plantations, a dominated site of management and containment where everything is "on the surface" and under surveillance. Moreover, Saint-Méry's re-imaginings simultaneously explode the verticality of the international/colonial border and the horizontal dimension that characterizes the borderland of the Maroons' Sierra de Bahoruco and substitute them with a different form of horizontality engendered by assimilation and by the total obliteration of differences and dissent. Saint-Méry's landscaping, therefore, betrays an underlying urge to conjure up a safe perspective from which to approach border politics and frame both borderland and the people living on it and which transcends scientific, objective "description." This urge becomes particularly poignant if one considers that while he was revising his work in 1793,³³ the Spanish colony was offering sanctuary to fugitive rebels from Saint-Domingue and lending them arms to support their struggle. Furthermore, in 1795, the Peace of Basle had sanctioned the cession of Santo Domingo to the French *République* and in 1796, date of publication of the *Description de la partie espagnole*, Toussaint's collaboration with the Republican government (that is, Saint-Méry's own enemies) was becoming stricter.

In his landscaping of the island, Saint-Méry constantly emphasizes the importance of human intervention to turn sterility into fertility. A plantation estate, Saint-Méry explains in the volumes devoted to Saint-Domingue, is a "grand and fine machine"³⁴ which also requires the work of engineers to function properly. Sugar and indigo production heavily depended on the presence of mills and other machines and on adequate irrigation. Time and time again, Saint-Méry proudly points out how the nature of vast areas of the French colony destined to sterility because of annual droughts had been dramatically altered with *ad hoc* hydraulic works. A case in point is the area on the French side of the River Massacre which could have been as dry and sterile as the Spanish one if the colonists and the colonial administration had not intervened. Since 1730 the inhabitants of the region had tried to find ways in which the water of the River Massacre could be used to irrigate the soil and move plantation mills. Their efforts were perfected in 1786, when it was decided that the five *habitations* in the area would benefit from a new water pipe from the river and their rights to the water and order of access to it were established by law.³⁵ Saint-Méry's triumphal tone seems to imply that

33. Ms, vol. I, p. A; PE, vol. I, p. 1.

34. Ms, vol. II, p. 229; PE, vol. II, p. 229.

35. PF, vol. I, pp. 127-28. Also when he describes Cul-de-Sac, an area close to the border in the Partie de L'Ouest, Saint-Méry highly praises French hydraulic engineering and its benefits (see PF, vol. II, p. 282).

the industriousness of the French practically “entitles” them to ownership of the Spanish part. This was not a new argument: for example, in 1730 it had been put forward rather forcefully by the Jesuit Pierre François-Xavier de Charlevoix in *Histoire de l’isle espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue*, one of Saint-Méry’s own sources.³⁶ The typical colonialist recasting of someone else’s land as an “empty space” which should be inhabited and put to good use is applied here to a territory occupied by another colonial power rather than to one belonging to an indigenous population. The border between the two colonies is re-imagined in a way which anticipates, albeit in a different context and historical juncture, Jackson Turner’s (1920) conceptualization of the westward-receding (North) American frontier which is inhabited but, paradoxically, unsettled, and therefore, implicitly, free land.

Enthusiasm for technological advancement notwithstanding, Saint-Méry is always careful to depict Saint-Domingue’s sugar plantations as almost “second nature” to the land:

But what a delicious view is offered to the voyageur when, at the extremity of these savannahs, he discovers the rich plain of the Maribarous district!

His eye glides over sugarcane fields ... he loves the effect that is produced on these waves of green, and then some trees of a deeper green put here and there as if to vary the scene. The buildings of a great number of manufactures add some interest to the scene and the woods on the shores of the Massacre River, crown and mark the horizon.³⁷

Once again Saint-Méry does not simply describe what he sees. He purposefully produces “delicious” views which are offered to the reader as evidence of the “progress that civilization had brought to the colony” of Saint-Domingue.³⁸ Significantly, in the above “vista,” the River Massacre is equated with the horizon which is “marked” by the river trees: the messy Spanish side on the other side of the border has literally and conveniently fallen off the edge of the horizon. The “scene” that the reader is invited to share with the *voyageur* is both framed (the vegetation “crowns” the horizon) and staged: Saint-Méry openly talks about “view” (*vue* in the original), candidly admits that he knows a thing or two about landscaping (“as if to vary the scene”) and depicts the sugarcane plantations and the interesting buildings next to them as empty of human figures. As Raymond Williams (1973:120) has famously noted, “a working country is hardly ever a landscape”; the lack of human figures in Saint-Méry’s “description” leads us to

36. Saint-Méry refers to Charlevoix’s work repeatedly in the *Description de la partie française* (see vol. I, pp. 118, 218, 265, 538).

37. PF, vol. I, p. 126.

38. PF, vol. I, p. xii.

conclude that he must have been embarrassingly aware that a country where slaves were worked to death, was even less so.

By 1789, that is at the time of Saint-Méry's "snapshot" of the colony, two-thirds of the roughly half a million slaves were African-born because the slave population of Saint-Domingue never really reproduced itself. The average working life of a plantation slave born in the colony was little more than fifteen years and no longer than that of creolized Africans who had survived the initial years. Slave mortality was due to overwork, undernourishment, and cruelty (Fick 1990:25-27). In Saint-Domingue, the field-slave quarters were small, with internal partitions and no windows, and, crucially, at some distance from the master's *grande case* or "great house" (Fick 1990:30-31). Slaves were organized into *ateliers* (work groups) according to their strength and health and all under the direct orders of a *commandeur*, frequently a Creole slave who would be given better clothing than the others to mark his higher status (Fick 1990:27, 30). Saint-Méry was very well aware of the different roles slaves had to play in sugar plantations: amongst the two hundred slaves he thought were necessary to run a sugar plantation of a hundred *carreaux* of land he also lists thirty artisans and domestics.³⁹ These domestic slaves, or *nègres à talent*, were also distinguishable from other slaves because of finer clothing, better food, and an overall better treatment. Generally, Saint-Méry writes, in the French colony, slaves were subjected to an "exact discipline."⁴⁰

The *Description de la partie espagnole* informs us that, on the Spanish side, things were a far cry from the hierarchically organized plantations of Saint-Domingue. In Santo Domingo, Saint-Méry contends, "slaves are treated with a mildness unknown of other nations"⁴¹ and, to their masters, they are "rather companion than slaves."⁴² This "mildness" had pragmatic reasons rather than moral ones: Spanish slaveowners were keen to extend the lives of their slaves for as long as possible because for a long time they had no access to the slave trade and suffered from a shortage of capital (Silie 2007:141). However, while in the city, slaves enjoyed a greater freedom than their companions who worked in plantations, in Santo Domingo's sugar mills the whip was widely used and slavery operated exactly as in other colonies (Deive 2007:96-97, 99, 108). In his account, however, Saint-Méry focuses on the fact that the Spanish Creoles were more likely to raising cattle than to cultivate the land⁴³ and emphasizes the resulting lack of social distinction between humans and, ultimately, between even humans and animals.

39. Ms, vol. II, pp. 225-29 ; PE, vol. II, pp. 225-29.

40. Ms, vol. I, p. 53; PE, vol. I, p. 60.

41. Ms, vol. I, p. 51; PE, vol. I, p. 59.

42. Ms, vol. I, p. 53; PE, vol. I, p. 60.

43. In his description of the Spanish side of the border area Saint-Méry counts numerous *hattes* but no *sucreries* (ms, vol. I, pp. 243-87; PE, vol. I, pp. 243-87).

Animals, he explains, are raised in *hattes* usually run by members of the same family, occasionally with the help of black slaves. According to him, this lifestyle would not be suitable for the French, “a lively, enterprising people, soon disgusted with whatever has the air of monotony.”⁴⁴ The *hatters* live in what are disparagingly described as

miserable huts, the sides of which are of piles or planks badly joined and the roof of straw. There is commonly a room from about 12 to 18 feet square, in which is a table, 2 to 3 stools and a *hamac*. The bed chamber is another room, not so large as the former containing several truckle-beds ... If it rains, the gutters formed by the openings, make the water fall on the inside, and the floor which is not paved and which differs from the neighboring meadows only in that the continual trodding has worn off the grass, is in a moment ankle-deep in mud.⁴⁵

The porosity of the hut, the inside of which is almost indistinguishable from the outside, mirrors Saint-Méry’s suggestion that it was not easy to separate the social status of the workers who lived there and, implicitly, the conditions of humans from the conditions of livestock. Conversely, in the eyes of some planters of French Saint-Domingue, their slaves *only* were not entirely distinguishable from cattle. The 1685 Black Code established that slaves were entitled to two changes of clothes per year but it was not unusual to see them move around in tatters or completely naked. When questioned by a visitor about the nakedness of his slaves, a Saint-Domingue colonist is reported to have matter-of-factly replied: “why not also ask us to put clothes on our cows, mules and dogs?” (Malenfant 1814 in Fouchard 1981:41).

In his *Description de la partie espagnole*, Saint-Méry informs us that the population of the Spanish colony was composed of three classes: “the Whites, the Freed-People and the Slaves. The Freed-People are few in number if compared to the Whites but their number is considerable if compared with that of the slaves.”⁴⁶ The process of “affranchissement” or “freeing” for slaves, he continues, is extremely easy in Santo Domingo as discriminatory laws exist but are “absolutely disregarded.” Moreover, not only does the political constitution of the colony admit “no distinction between the civil rights of a white inhabitant and those of a free-person”⁴⁷ but “that prejudice with respect to colour, so powerful with other nations among whom it fixes a bar between the Whites and the Freed People and their descendants, is almost

44. Ms, vol. II, p. 209; PE, vol. II, p. 209.

45. Ms, vol. I, pp. 70-71; PE, vol. I, pp. 70-71.

46. Ms, vol. I, pp. 47-48; PE, vol. I, p. 57.

47. Ms, vol. I, p. 51; PE, vol. I, pp. 58-59.

unknown in the Spanish part of Santo Domingo.”⁴⁸ For his *Description* of the Spanish part as a prejudice-free colony, Saint-Méry relied on the work of Antonio Sánchez Valverde Ocaña, a lawyer, theologian, and author of *Idea del Valor de la Isla Espanola, y utilidades, que de ella puede sacar su monarquía* which was published in Madrid in 1785 and contains an accurate geographical and topographical description of Santo Domingo as well as commentaries on its history and on its sociopolitical and racial fabric.⁴⁹ Sanchez Valverde was a member of the white slave-holding class with a very clear political and racial agenda: he vehemently condemned the ease with which slaves were emancipated in the Spanish colony and resorted to the discourse of morality to support his position. More often than not, he explained, manumissions were sinful acts because they were the consequence of too close a “familiarity” between masters and female slaves (Sanchez Valverde 1988:254). Sanchez Valverde pragmatically praised the French system which required that the masters who wanted to free one of their slaves had to pay one hundred and fifty pesos to the king because he considered it an effective way of discouraging widespread manumissions and, indirectly, of upholding social and racial discrimination (Sanchez Valverde 1988:225). However, despite this “tax,” in 1789 Saint-Domingue, the number of *affranchis* had reached a near-equal balance with the white population. They owned one-third of the plantation property, one-quarter of the slaves, and one-quarter of the real estate property but they were kept in a constant state of resentment and degradation by vehemently enforced discriminatory laws aimed at maintaining white supremacy. The *affranchis* were legally defined as a distinct and subordinate social “caste” as it was understood that they forever retained the “imprint” of slavery no matter how far removed they were from their black origin (Fick 1990:19-21). As Saint-Méry writes, the allegedly indelible imprint of slavery was crucial to arguments aimed at reinforcing white privilege:

To support the opinion which does not admit the possibility of a total disappearance of the trace of intermixing and therefore wants that a prolonged ad infinitum will always separate white descendants from the rest it is understood that the hue which becomes weaker in two or three generations surfaces again and reveals the African mixture; and [it is also under-

48. Ms, vol. I, p. 49-50; PE, vol. I, pp. 58-59. In the English translation, the adjective “salutary” was added to “prejudice” but later deleted.

49. In particular, Saint-Méry praises Sanchez Valverde’s work and declares that he has followed its structure in his *Description* (PE, vol. I, pp. 37-38); he then refers to his views on the irrigation of the Artibonite plain (PE, vol. I, p. 265) and to his discussion of the potential benefits of the development of agriculture and the exploitation of the mines in the Spanish part of the island (PE, vol. II, pp. 155-56).

stood] that colour is not the best marker but the whole of the traits such as a flat nose, thick lips are very indicative of the origin.⁵⁰

This “opinion,” Saint-Méry insists, was the product of the “eye of prejudice”⁵¹ but, ironically, and despite his affected distancing from prejudice, Saint-Méry himself does not seem exempt from it. It is worth remembering here that the title page of the volumes devoted to the French colony indicates that Saint-Méry chose to “freeze” the colony *before* the (to him, disgraceful) moment in which the National Assembly accepted the petition of rights of “free citizens of color” from Saint-Domingue. Moreover, in his *Description de la partie française*, Saint-Méry famously includes his well-known and extremely elaborated racial classification scheme in which he claims that the presence of black parts in different quantities is responsible for various distinctive traits in an individual. Amongst them he identifies, or rather, “constructs,” distinct hues of whiteness (i.e. “The Quarteron has white skin but shaded to a very pale yellow”) or physical weakness and incapacity to reproduce (i.e. “The Métif is even weaker than the White ... and more overpowered by the climate. He hardly reproduces himself”).⁵²

If read together, the two *Descriptions* give the border an important role to play in the racial politics of Hispaniola because, Saint-Méry maintains, color and blood did not seem to be given the same significance in the social hierarchy of the French and Spanish colonies. Furthermore, Saint-Méry claims that “it is true, and even strictly so, that the major part of the Spanish colonists are a mixed-race: this one African feature, and sometimes more than one, often betrays.”⁵³ Saint-Méry, however quickly adds that many white Creoles of Santo Domingo – and he mentions Sanchez Valverde as his primary example – would reject with indignation this suggestion.⁵⁴ In *Idea del valor de la isla Española*, Sanchez Valverde sounds totally outraged by the allegations made by those metropolitan historians – he refers to the French Weuves (1780) in particular – who suggested that the mixed blood of the colonists was the reason for their laziness and, ultimately, behind Santo Domingo’s poverty (Sanchez Valverde 1988:245). According to Weuves, the indolent Spanish colonists could hardly be called “Spanish” because they were almost invariably mixed with Caribs and blacks. Moreover, he also claimed that Spain itself did not contain a single drop of pure blood because of the presence of blacks in its colonies and, earlier on, of the Moors on its territory (Sanchez

50. PF, vol. I, p. 86.

51. PF, vol. I, p. 87.

52. PF, vol. I, p. 76, 78.

53. Ms, vol. I, p. 49; PE, vol. I, p. 59. In the French manuscript this remark is to be found in the column for revisions and addition (54 Verso).

54. PE, vol. I, p. 59.

Valverde 1988:245). Sanchez Valverde replied to these assertions by saying that Spanish blood was as pure as the blood one could find on any other European nation (an interestingly ambiguous answer) and, more specifically, by insisting that the Spanish colonists of Hispaniola had better preserved their purity than their aristocratic French counterparts who frequently married rich *mulatas* (Sanchez Valverde 1988:245-46). For these early historiographers of the island, therefore, the vertical frontier seems also to have functioned as an imagined demarcation between “proper” and “improper” racial relations since they lamented that, on the other side, purity of blood was not upheld as it should have been. It was an “imagined” demarcation because, despite its topographical and political instability, this border was clearly inscribed on their mental map of the island. Most importantly, it was “imagined” because miscegenation was an incontrovertible, and, simultaneously, paradoxically and painstakingly denied fact, on both sides of the border.⁵⁵

Saint-Méry’s urge to construct the rigid racial taxonomy that he is (in) famous for is therefore better understood in the context of the “imagined” partitioned island as a whole. His racial divisions and subdivisions pertaining to the population of Saint-Domingue are concomitant to his positing of the colonial frontier as a flimsy boundary beyond which, he claims, social and racial relations were not properly policed. It has been suggested that some of the terms Saint-Méry uses to designate mixed-race individuals – such as *Marabou* and *Griffon* or *Griffe* – are borrowed from beasts and mythical monsters (Dayan 1998:232-33).⁵⁶ These onomastic practices collapse distinction between the animal world and the human beings in question and resonate with Saint-Méry’s comments on the almost animalesque life and customs of the *hattiers* of the Spanish part. Things, however, were more complicated than this and Saint-Méry found himself in a tricky position vis-à-vis the exploration of the reasons underpinning Santo Domingo’s pitiable state of affairs. On the one hand, he seems to inscribe himself in the French “tradition” of blaming the bad temperament and laziness of the Spaniards for Santo Domingo’s problems and has no qualms about subscribing to French mixophobic discourses when he asserts that the Spanish colonists were, for the most part, a mixed race. On the other hand, Saint-Méry had carefully read Sanchez Valverde’s attack on French historians for what the Spanish Creole called “insolence” (Sanchez Valverde 1988:244-45) and was aware that he could not afford to ignore the broader implications of his own xenophobic and racist remarks. Saint-Méry was a

55. Saint-Méry might have had a *quarteronne* (three-quarters white) daughter called Ameinade with his housekeeper, a free woman of color who had worked for him for several years (John Garrigus quoted in Dubois 2004:68).

56. According to Dayan, “*Marabou* is the name of a bird” and “*Griffon* has numerous meanings: a coarse-haired dog, a fabulous animal with the head and wings of an eagle and hindquarters of a lion.”

French Creole very proud of his tropical origin – in the *Description de la partie française*, whenever possible, he catalogues and celebrates notable people born in the colony.⁵⁷ He also goes as far as saying that at birth, the white Creoles are endowed with a number of “gifts” that people born elsewhere do not receive and which are partly the result of Saint-Domingue’s climate. Unfortunately, he adds, they lose their advantage over others because they are spoilt as children by over-indulgent parents (especially Creole mothers who tend to be excessively sensitive and delicate), by the presence of slaves who are at their beck and call, and by a regrettable lack of proper education.⁵⁸ Sadly, he contends, these important factors are never taken into consideration when those born in the Americas are branded as inept or indolent⁵⁹ and in a short aside in the *Description de la partie espagnole*, Saint-Méry feels the need to clarify that he blames Spain rather than the Creole colonists whom, he reveals, are abandoned to their own devices by their central government.⁶⁰ In so doing, he simultaneously circumvents raciologic and anti-American/anti-Creole discourses and also aligns himself with his fellow Creole Sanchez Valverde in his firm rebuttal of the assertion that the people born in the New World were degenerate because under the unhealthy influence of the place they inhabited.⁶¹ The border between the two colonies is at this point provisionally erased by Saint-Méry in favor of the establishment of a white Creole transcolonial and transnational horizontal brotherhood which rejects tropical degeneration.⁶²

The differences in racial and social structuring between the two sides of the island presented by Saint-Méry are clearly at odds with his imaginary and appropriative landscaping of the Spanish colony: it just does not seem likely that the (allegedly) egalitarian society of Santo Domingo⁶³ could be as unproblematically assimilated to Saint-Domingue’s segregationist way of

57. For example, for the parish of Fort Dauphin he mentions Monsieur Croiseuil, translator of Ovid (PF, vol. I, p. 139) and for the Parish of Limonade he mentions Monsieur de Chabanon de l’Académie Française and of the Académie de Belles-Lettres and his brother, Monsieur Chabanon de Maugris, translator of Horace and author of *mémoires* published by the Académie de Sciences (PF, vol. I, p. 217).

58. PF, vol. I, pp. 12-14, 18.

59. PF, vol. I, p. 15.

60. PE, vol. I, pp. 300-1.

61. PE, vol. I, p. 301.

62. Saint-Méry also depicts black Creoles as superior to African blacks both physically and morally but that this is mainly due to their proximity to the whites from whom they learn how to behave (PF, vol. I, pp. 39-40).

63. The fugitive slaves from Saint Domingue were usually taken to a settlement on the eastern side of the Ozama River which was called San Lorenzo de los Minas. They were then forced to work in the *hatos* described above, in the capital’s construction sites for public buildings or to join the border militia. They were free, but racial and social prejudices condemned them to live as second-class citizens. It goes without saying, however,

life as his territorial projections seem to suggest and, indeed, advocate. Saint-Méry's fantasy of expansionism, in fact, had a very complicated relationship with reality. At the end of the second volume on Santo Domingo, he informs us that the question of a possible French acquisition of the Spanish side had actually been considered by the French since 1698.⁶⁴ Saint-Méry then proceeds to develop what seems a convincing argument which highlights six different reasons why France could benefit from the annexation of the Spanish part of Hispaniola.⁶⁵ Among other things, Saint-Méry points out that the elimination of the internal border of Hispaniola presupposed the elimination or at least the reduction of *marronage*,⁶⁶ a definite bonus for Saint-Domingue's planters. This argument is however followed by the articulation of a more detailed and even more persuasive line of reasoning that shows instead that this would be a disastrous option for France and by Saint-Méry voicing his unequivocal and vehement hostility to the notion of unification. His objections are all of a practical nature: most of all, Saint-Méry insists that it is impossible to build, man, and render profitable the same *sucreries* that his gaze so easily conjured up in the plains of Santo Domingo. What might appear bewildering at first, has instead a perfectly rational explanation.

Saint-Méry's opposition to an *actual* appropriation of Santo Domingo is incongruous with his imaginary landscaping of the colony only if one does not consider his utopian fantasy of an extended network of sugar plantations as another perfected imperial perspective which magically removes all that is discordant with it. Undoubtedly, the difficulties that the Saint-Domingue elite would have encountered in dealing with the population of Santo Domingo as described by Saint-Méry himself – that is with a majority of *sang-mêlé* colonizers, with *affranchis* used to having the same civil status as whites and slaves who could easily purchase their freedom and were treated with "mildness" – must not have escaped his meticulous reasoning on the feasibility of unification. Nevertheless, none of these considerations seem to underpin his decision to pronounce French expansion into Santo Domingo a mere "*chimère*."⁶⁷ Chimeras and reality, Saint-Méry insists, are poles apart but reality was most uncomfortably catching up with him. I have already

that as difficult as this predicament might have been, it was certainly preferable to slavery (Moya Pons 2009:86-97).

64. Ms, vol. II, p. 189; PE, vol. II, p. 189.

65. The six reasons that Saint-Méry enumerates and discusses are: "1) a more defensible position; 2) a greater security for navigation in war time; 3) a greater certainty of subsistence; 4) an augmentation of population; 5) a more extensive cultivation; 6) an augmentation of commerce" (ms, vol. II, pp. 190-240); (PE, vol. II, pp. 190-240).

66. Ms, vol. II, pp. 198-99; PE, vol. II, pp. 198-99. Interestingly, a few pages later, when he argues *against* the unification of the island, Saint-Méry decides to ignore this particular point.

67. Ms, vol. II, p. 234; PE, vol. II, p. 234.

pointed out that Saint-Méry was provided with the opportunity to publish his *Description* of the Spanish side by the 1795 Treaty of Basle which officially sanctioned the cession of Spanish Santo Domingo to France and marked the end of an era in the history of Hispaniola. In his “Advertisement” to the volume, Saint-Méry proudly declares that the new geopolitical scenario of the island has not altered his views on the acquisition of Spanish Santo Domingo and categorically denies having curbed his “thoughts to occasional events.”⁶⁸ Uncannily, his disquisition on the matter begins with the declaration that since Spain will never give up her colony, a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the unification of the island under French administration was just a mere abstraction, or, indeed, as he puts it, a *chimère*. Of course, the very fact that in 1795 Spain had in fact relinquished Spanish Santo Domingo to the French disallowed and disallows Saint-Méry’s readers to interpret his views on the matter as simple conjecture. Yet again, the *Description* is not what it claims to be: rather than a mere portrayal of the past, Saint-Méry’s work is inspired by the author’s ambition to intervene in and hopefully influence current border affairs. The erasure of the frontier brought about by the Peace of Basle between Spain and Republican France did not favor the interests of the white Creole elite to which Saint-Méry belonged (Matibag 2003:71-72) so it is not surprising that the subscribers who made the publication of the *Description de la partie espagnole* possible, and whose names are listed at the beginning of the first volume, were mainly Saint-Domingue’s colonists living in the United States.⁶⁹

Saint-Méry’s and his supporters’ belief in the political potential of his work was not mere wishful thinking. They might have genuinely felt that there was still some space for manoeuvre because, at the time of publication, the French acquisition of the Spanish part was sanctioned *de jure* but was not “taking place” *de facto*. The treaty of Basle did not specify an exact date of the transfer of power as it was agreed that such date depended on Spain providing the means for evacuation to the population of the Spanish colony, a long and laborious process complicated, among other things, by the question of the slaves living and working in what was formerly Santo Domingo. The French Republicans insisted that they were allowed to stay on the island as freemen and women while the Spanish considered them as their property and maintained that, as such, they had to follow them in their exile from the island (Laveaux to García: November 1795 in Demorizi 1958:17-20). Besides, lack of French military personnel to substitute the Spanish garrison also delayed the transition, as the French realized that a strong Spanish military presence in Santo Domingo was

68. Ms, vol. I, p. F; PE, vol. I, p. 6.

69. One finds twenty-nine Saint-Domingue colonists living in Philadelphia, Albany (New York), Wilmington (Delaware), Baltimore, and Elizabeth Town (Jersey). Saint-Méry also mentions four shopkeepers from Cap-Français living in the United States.

key to the security of the entire island (Schaeffer 1949:53). English successes in the southern part of Saint-Domingue further contributed to leaving things as they were and the actual unification of the island under the French administration would finally be achieved only in 1801 by Toussaint.

Saint-Méry, however, does not just oppose unification resolutely; he insists that, rather than acquiring Santo Domingo, France should try to recuperate Louisiana given to Spain in 1762.⁷⁰ The desire of France to recover its former North American possession had been the subject of numerous political discussions since the day of its loss in 1763 but it is worth mentioning that this suggestion was topical indeed when the *Description* was published. In December 1795, Spain did propose a treaty according to which Santo Domingo would be returned to Spain in exchange for Louisiana but the French Directory firmly rejected it in June 1796 (Schaeffer 1949:52). If, in colonial terms and within the remit of the rhetoric of the Enlightenment, Saint-Méry's imaginary expansion into the Spanish side of Hispaniola could be regarded as a daring move forward in time along the line of "progress" (that is, further development and exploitation), his insistence on the desirability to reacquire Louisiana suggests that he was instead folding back onto the past. This is in line with the trajectory of his politics: from being an active participant of the French Revolution, he ended up becoming a staunch supporter of Napoleonic reaction.

Saint-Méry's commitment to the reconstitution of the *Ancien Régime's* status quo that both his *Descriptions* minutely depict also compelled him to include a visual reinscription of the recently erased border of Hispaniola. His oeuvre is illustrated by a map of the island which, on the title page of the two *Descriptions*, is referred to as "new" and which is positioned at the beginning of both books so that it precedes rather than follows Saint-Méry's words. A hand-written draft for a leaflet aimed at publicizing the first volume of the *Description de la partie espagnole* describes the book as "A New Useful and Amusing Work" and the map it contains as "new, elegant and correct." Evidently, "new" and "correct" are highly misleading adjectives to use when describing a map that, in 1796 and 1797, was so blatantly out-of-date, and Saint-Méry was of course very well aware of this. However, such deliber-

70. Saint-Méry's wife, he informs his reader, was actually from Louisiana and her father and uncle were amongst the French *proscrits* who rebelled against Louisiana's cessation to Spain. In the English manuscripts the word *proscrits* is substituted by the more emphatic "sufferers." Moreover, Saint-Méry refers to such *proscrits* or "sufferers" as patriots whose sacrifice will forever demonstrate that Frenchmen are not "to be sold like cattle" or, in French, "*trafiqu[és] ... comme des troupeaux*" (ms, vol. II, p. 236; PE, vol. II, p. 236). The fact that there was a connection in his mind between Louisiana and the unstable border between Santo Domingo and Saint-Domingue is evidenced by Saint-Méry's choice of terminology: as we have seen, cattle and slaves were bought, sold, and, more often than not, smuggled across the border between Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo and the French verb *trafiquer* does gesture toward illicit activities.

ately misguiding appellatives, combined with the fact that, before reading the *Descriptions*, the reader is given access to a visual source where the two sides of the island are neatly separated by a very heavily marked border, have the function of naturalizing what was no longer officially there and constitute a powerful addition to Saint-Méry's reactionary project to turn the past into the future.

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GORDON ROHLEHR AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY IN TRINIDAD

INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRINIDAD CULTURE INDUSTRY

Trinidad & Tobago (“Trinidad”) markets itself as a center of “cultural” tourism, and a producer of the academic knowledge its culture generates. In this, the country is not unique in the Caribbean. Such an orientation of a cultural economy and its discourse has been described by historian Barry Higman as “heritage tourism,” where history, historical narratives, and the satellite festivals and activities become cultural products for commercial purposes. As late as February 2011, the Department of Creative and Festival Arts of the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine, hosted a seminar which reiterated the institution’s commitment to the “Carnival complex”: an integration of the social, economic, and intellectual aspects of the Trinidad Carnival into the country’s quotidian social and economic life.¹

This project has been proceeded, led, and endorsed by academics, with a remarkable sanguinity regarding the social-political problematic of the “culture industry” – specifically the meaning of the phenomenon as described by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1999), the Frankfurt School and similar cultural theorists – and its social implications and consequences. Neither does the project’s de facto function as an adjunct to the “nationalist” project seem to attract the appropriate amount of critical attention (Ramcharitar 2008b).

Adorno’s theorizing of the culture industry is denunciatory. He argues that “culture” (materialized and disseminated in films, durable goods, architecture, art, and popular music) is used by economic and political power groups to bring about “the stunting of the ... consumer’s powers of imagination and spontaneity,” to make them consumerist automata, docile and easily manipulated (Adorno 1991:35). In Trinidadian (and West Indian) academia, the very recent acknowledgment of Cultural Studies as a formal discipline,

1. Videos of the main talks (and others) can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TriniData>.

and its open ideological orientation toward the Carnival complex, have not given much hope that Adorno's critique will gain much traction.²

This does not mean that the critical examination of society and culture has been absent from West Indian/Trinidadian intellectual discourse, or that it has all been reactionary. From J.J. Thomas in the nineteenth century, to C.L.R. James, Lloyd Best, and V.S. Naipaul in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the practice has been an integral part of the intellectual and artistic narratives of the country and the region. Indeed, cultural criticism is an inevitable consequence of the colonizer-colonized relationship, where values, practices, and beliefs are hierarchized and economies of status are imposed on subject peoples by colonizers.

But in the present, Trinidad, like other West Indian societies engrossed in narcissistic "nationalisms," seems impatient with the unsparing, and potentially transformative, conclusions and prescriptions disinterested analyses of local values, cultural practices, and ways of living provide. This is especially so if contemporary academic politics are traduced, and the indigene is not automatically accorded moral vindication, and when these analyses eclipse authorized narratives – slavery, gender and ethnic oppression, and Carnival – which work in the service of the political status quo. Concretely, in academia, there seems to be no awareness of questions like: How has the internet (via Facebook, Twitter, pornography) affected local social relations? How do homo- and heterosexuality shape public discourse? How does transnational consumerism, transmitted via television and pop music, shape local culture? How are local consumerism, capitalism, and the administration of the state connected? How are culture and political power related? As will be discussed in this paper, some of these studies exist, but are produced outside regional academia, and this deficiency has stunted the region's development potential.

Ironically, there does exist a cultural critique which addresses at least some of these lacunae and aporias in Trinidad. It originates from the preeminent scholar of the Trinidad calypso and Carnival, UWI academic, Gordon Rohlehr. That critique has been essayed in plain sight, and has been ignored by academia, public policy, and the public at large. Apropos, this paper will attempt to do two things: first, to locate Rohlehr in a tradition of Trinidadian (and West Indian) cultural criticism which has existed since the late nineteenth century; and second, examine Rohlehr's critique of Trinidad's nationalist culture and cultural eidos, and identify elements of their production and deployment which pertain to Adorno's idea of the "culture industry," and a few other pertinent ideas (cultural schizophrenia, the devaluation of intellectual work) which, for various reasons, have been avoided by UWI academics. Naturally, this will entail a critical examination of the practice of Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies.

2. The discipline was "recognized" in the *Caribbean Quarterly* 51(3&4) 2005: "Cultural Studies: A New Generation of Scholars."

TRINIDAD: A BRIEF HISTORY

Trinidad's social history is distinct from the rest of the Anglo-Caribbean's in several ways. The most obvious is that it consists of roughly equal numbers of citizens of African and Indian descent, a significant mixed-race minority, and small minorities of Europeans, Middle Easterners, and Chinese, which makes it similar in that respect to Rohlehr's native Guyana. However, Trinidad's geography (a small island rather than a continental hinterland), and its relatively recent history – its colonization only began in the late eighteenth century, and immigrants continued to come until well into the twentieth century – make its dynamics unique.

In addition to absorbing immigrants well into the independence era, the island continued to produce significant numbers of emigrants, first in the postwar "wave" to the United Kingdom, and the postcolonial "waves" to the United States and Canada. Between 1950 and 1989, Trinidad's net migration balance was an outflow of more than 280,000 people (Samuel 2005:585). The population was continuously replenished by illegal immigrants from other Caribbean islands – mainly Grenada and St. Vincent, a migratory stream that has persisted from the nineteenth century. Apart from the high "churn rate" in population and the inability of a single ontological, nationalist, religious, or secular-cultural matrix to solidify, other differences were and remain more significant.

The country's language, until the mid-nineteenth century, was French, and its institutions were steeped in French culture, while its laws were Spanish. It entered its plantation phase late, and slavery lasted less than a half-century. By emancipation, there was an unusually low proportion of formerly enslaved, and a high proportion of free mixed-race persons, who were concerned with their own status and autonomy, as distinct from the formerly enslaved, and which has persisted to the present under the guise of "nationalist" rhetoric (Brereton 1993:34). By the end of the nineteenth century, a ruthless program of socially engineered institutional change saw the installation and dominance of British institutional practice and culture, and a sublimation of the English-French conflict into social factions (Brereton 1993:37).

The incoming Indian indentured immigrants (between 1845 and 1917) spoke several Indian languages, and drove the multifarious African (mixed-race, middle-class, and formerly enslaved underclass) groups into an almost involuntary unification, to focus resistance on what they saw as a threat to their claim to the colony. The Indians brought their culture with them, and the Africans benefited from the influx of some 60,000 West African immigrants between 1841 and 1861, whose culture over-wrote the extant post-slavery African retentions, and formed a cultural bulwark for the Afro-descended population (Trotman 2007:211-34, Wood 1968).

The oppositional cultures, embryonic institutions (educational, cultural, and political) and the relatively undeveloped society led to continuous social frissons: there was no school, language, church, or public sphere where all groups could communicate and be socialized into a common set of values. Because the planters and merchants required the Indo workforce to remain on, or close to the plantations, they were not encouraged to migrate internally, and indeed, their highly visible retained culture became a useful device for emphasizing their difference from the rest of the population.

Democracy and the franchise also came late. Until 1925, a single individual, the governor, held a monopoly of political power, which caused great resentment in the growing numbers of politically conscious, educated black, mixed-race (and later, Indian) middle-class professionals. A limited franchise was granted in 1925, and universal franchise in 1946. The interwar years saw the emergence of Afro- and Indo-nationalist groups, along with a strong Labor Socialist movement, and the emergence of several political factions. The opposing Afro- and Indo-majority cultural factions coalesced around their own ideas of nationalism, but the superiority of British culture remained unquestioned. This conflict-ridden relationship persisted through Independence, with the Afro-nationalist position triumphing electorally in 1956, under the charismatic leadership of the Oxford-educated Eric Williams, and remaining entrenched until 1986 (Meighoo 2002, Oxaal 1982, Ryan 1972). This long season of institutional control allowed the Peoples National Movement (PNM) to entrench its "Creole" worldview as "national" and anything else as "racist and unpatriotic" – with the discourse linked to the retention of political power (Yelvington 1993:13).

The centerpiece of postemancipation Creole culture was the Trinidad Carnival. Its positioning in the urban sphere, and its unapologetically Afrocentric orientation made it a perfect vehicle for promoting Afronationalism, and its political structure (the PNM), under the guise of "national culture," to the exclusion of IndoTrinidad (Van Koningsbruggen 1997, Stuempfle 1995, Yelvington 1993).

Indeed, because of the PNM's cultural manipulation, the single defining aspect of Trinidadian culture is that Carnival, political power, and racial competition have become inextricably intertwined, with the invocation of any one activating the other two. This strategy continued well into the 1990s: the Indo-based political party, the United National Congress's (UNC) accession to political power created a trauma in the Afro section of the population (Ryan 2002:6) which led to open racial conflict, though not physical violence, but via talk radio, the media, and via the medium of Carnival (Ramcharitar 2005:19-78). Naturally, any critique of Carnival pointing out its obvious political deployment and orientation, was discouraged – this was true in academia, as well as in the public sphere (Van Koningsbruggen 1997).

The UNC was displaced from power in 2001, and the PNM returned from 2002 to 2010. This period saw an intensification of the discourses of ethnic nationalism, the state's, academia's, and Carnival's three-way embrace become cemented in a mythos of multiethnic Trinidad nationalism (Sadre-Orafi 2004:226-27). With the return of the UNC to political power in 2010, the idea that Carnival was *the* national culture of Trinidad was cemented in orthodoxy, and that government embraced it as the centerpiece of its new multiculturalism policy – without any assessment of whether this was borne out by the facts.

GORDON ROHLEHR AND TRINIDAD

Into this contentious, racially charged environment, Gordon Rohlehr landed as an insider-outsider, with two assets: his education and formation at a particular historical moment in the region's history, and his understanding of the dynamics of the Afro-Indo political dyad. He was born in Guyana in 1942, attended Queen's College in Georgetown, and was a scholarship undergraduate at the University College of the West Indies (Mona, Jamaica). He was awarded his doctorate from the University of Manchester in 1967, and returned to the University of the West Indies the following year, to Trinidad, where he still lives.

An important aspect of Rohlehr's location in West Indian society and letters resides in his beginnings: his grammar school education made him a privileged colonial. The Queen's Colleges throughout the Anglo-Caribbean were started in the nineteenth century to educate an accomplished stratum of West Indians to occupy positions of importance in the colonial administration. The young men who attended these colleges, according to historian Carl Campbell, were steeped in "English modes of education and thinking" by the inculcation of "English habits and English loyalties." The schools were initially intended for white boys, but well before Rohlehr's time, it was accepted that black and Indian boys would be among the chosen (Campbell 1992:25). He shares this status with V.S. Naipaul, Lloyd Best, Eric Williams, C.L.R. James, Derek Walcott, and many other prominent non-white West Indians who have shaped the destiny of the region. The education was uniform throughout the system so the graduates of the schools were intimately conversant with each other. Doubtless this network was intended to form the basis of an organic society. Though Rohlehr's view, articulated in his essay "Intersecting QRC Lives" (2007:206), is in general agreement, he writes that the purpose of the education system was the production of "an overseer caste." However, at the conference in his honor, at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, in late 2007, his classmates from his own Queen's College days in Guyana were visibly, vocally, and proudly in attendance. The links and imprint of that experience were clearly crucial to his formation, as

it was for Best, James, and Naipaul. However, it seems that the critique of colonialism was enabled by the very education, hence the uniformity of the critique from all these men.

In Trinidad, Rohlehr has made his life's work the detailed examination and analysis of its social history, as refracted through its poets and writers' work, and through Carnival and calypso, using literary criticism as an entrée into social criticism. But his work as a scholar is much more variegated. From the 1970s, he has been fully engaged with the society: he spoke widely, was involved in social movements, published more than one hundred essays in a variety of publications, from the mainstream *Caribbean Quarterly* to the obscure ones, like *Tapia* and *Moko* – which were ostensibly seats of revolutionary rhetoric in the 1970s. The compilation of his early essays, published in 1992, in the collections *The Shape of that Hurt* (TSH) and *My Strangled City* (MSC), provide a meticulous social history of 1970s and 1980s Trinidad. His opus, *Calypso and Society in pre-Independence Trinidad* (CS) (1990), was the distillation of two decades of listening to the calypso, writing about it, and establishing the Geertzian “thick” connections and contexts. He thereafter published *A Scuffling of Islands* (SI) (2005), and *Transgression, Transition, Transformation* (TTT) (2007), which saw a divergence in theme and subject of inquiry. His literary criticism also yielded significant books in *Black Awakening in The Arrivants of Edward Kamau Brathwaite* (1981), and *Ancestories: Readings of Kamau Brathwaite's Ancestors* (2010). He has been involved in producing numerous radio and television programs, and delivered public lectures on West Indian literature, Carnival, and calypso regionally and abroad. He has held visiting professorships at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Dartmouth, and various other North American universities. If there is one lacuna in his work, it is that he deals with urban, Afrocreole society, and has little to say about the Indo population, but he is incontestably the most important, erudite, and prolific critic of Trinidadian culture in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Among the recurrent themes of his first three collections are the political manipulation of culture, the abuse of historical narratives and the devaluation of intellectual work, and the psychological distortions of colonialism which haunt Trinidad. Remarkably, given the putative regard in which he and his work are held, the critique has had no apparent effect – no acknowledgement in academia, public policy, or public debate.³ Though he remains esteemed as a scholar of the calypso.

Rohlehr's conclusions about power, culture, and nationalism (and their reception by academia and society), are common to his community of scholars. Lloyd Best, V.S. Naipaul, and Derek Walcott, are contemporary points on a line of cultural criticism stretching back to the nineteenth cen-

3. One UWI, St. Augustine academic, Louis Regis, has continued Rohlehr's work in studying the calypso. See Regis 1999.

tury, produced similar conclusions. But before tracing this genealogy, a look at the status of the discipline in Trinidad (UWI) is required to explain why Rohlehr's critique has been ignored.

INTRODUCING CULTURAL STUDIES

In introducing the September-December 2005 issue of *Caribbean Quarterly* which welcomed "a new generation of scholars," then UWI Chancellor Emeritus Rex Nettleford (2005:v) wrote: "I, for one, was amazed that what I had been doing for years in the quest for relevance and for the kind of truth that is rooted in the reality immediately around me, could be subsumed under the *new mantra of Cultural Studies*" (emphasis added). The activity he describes as having participated in better describes a related but less elaborate antecedent of today's Cultural Studies. The dynamics of that antecedent practice are best described in T.S. Eliot's essay, "Notes Toward a Definition of Culture," as the "baffling problem of 'culture' [that] underlies the relation of every part of the world to every other," and which included "the relation of great to small nations" and "the colonist to the native" (Kermode 1975:294).

The social critique Eliot describes was a fundamentally moral one – of, for example, righteous anger against colonialist, imperialist, class, or racial injustice. It was inextricable from religion, or more specifically, Christianity, which provided currency for its moral economy, and fleshed out its "structures of feeling," in creating emotional-intellectual responses to the issues examined (Williams 2009:35-50). The epistemological matrix, whose terms were defined in Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (2006), held roughly until the end of World War II.

The postwar period saw the emergence of the global consumer economy dominated by the modern multinational corporation integrated into the structure and function of government, cold war politics in the United States and Caribbean, and postcoloniality in Europe's formerly colonized world. It also saw, consequentially, the growth of transnational media, and the fusion of political groups, media, ethnic groups, and multinational business to create narratives in their own service against various "Others." Naturally, more sophisticated theories and analyses emerged – hybrids of anthropology, sociology, linguistics, literary criticism, history, social psychology, and media studies (West 1999:256-71). Among the seminal theorists of the new cultural paradigm were the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham School, which developed from a base of Marxist philosophy and criticism, and despite Nettleford's sanguinity, it is with these that the University of the West Indies, and the region's cultural critics and social scientists have not kept step, in favor of the local cultural preoccupations of Carnival as a celebration, slavery, and various forms of oppression. These preoccupations are visible in the

table of contents of Nettleford's "new generation" of scholars' essay subjects: on Rastafari, childbirth, Caribbean dance, dancehall, entrepreneurship and crime, slavery, and Creole language.⁴

That his remarks about his surprise at the new discipline's exigencies are literal, and not ironic, is suggested by Nettleford's statement (in 1991) at a conference organized by the New York-based Research Institute for the Study of Man (RISM), that "[b]elief systems, ideologies, attitudes, sensibilities, lifestyles, are now numbered among the variables that must be studied" by Caribbean academics, since there existed an "epistemological fallacy by closed groups laying claim to exclusive branches of knowledge" (Nettleford 1991:16). As Rohlehr remarked at a regional conference in 1988, "[t]he ISER [Institute of Social and Economic and Social Research at Mona] has never recognized culture as part of the business of social research" (TSH 219). Indeed, the RISM appears to have conducted much research in what could be classified as "Cultural Studies" in the region from independence to the 1980s (Comitas 1991:1-6).

This position, of the tendentious distortion of scholarship (of adopting an isolationist view of African history and culture in the New World), was disparaged by Paul Gilroy in his superb *The Black Atlantic*, as he berated the "ontological essentialist view" propounded by black intellectuals which was "a commentary on the special needs and desires of relatively privileged castes within the black community" (Gilroy 1993:32-33).

The poverty of the scholarly work within the University of the West Indies in this area was reiterated nearly two decades later by Patricia Northover and Michaeline Critchlow who linked the Caribbean's developmental failures to "a failure to provide analyses capable of providing a better grasp of the forces shaping/challenging the dynamic development of the Caribbean's 'Creole' societies." They criticize contemporary approaches as being "deficient in the analysis of the state-society-economy relationship, or more generally, the relationship between modern power and its subjects" (Northover & Critchlow 2010:136-37).

The deficiency is visible in even a cursory look at contemporary scholarship on relevant phenomena in Trinidad. The pioneering (and so far, only) work on the Internet and its effects on Trinidadian culture was done by British anthropologists Daniel Miller and Don Slater (2000). Miller (1996) also did the only study of the effect of soap operas on Trinidad audiences in the 1980s. Only recently has the University of the West Indies, via its academics, acknowledged the work of Jamaican-born Stuart Hall, one of the towering figures in Cultural Studies for decades, with the publication of *Culture, Politics, Race and Disapora: The Thought of Stuart Hall*, edited by UWI academic, Brian Meeks (2007).

4. *Caribbean Quarterly* 51(3&4), p. i (Table of Contents).

In addition to Miller, other foreign academics' significant works include (among others) Jocelyne Guibault's *Governing Sound: The Cultural Politics of Trinidad's Carnival Musics* (2007), Stephen Stuempfle's *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad and Tobago* (1995), Peter van Koningsbruggen's *Trinidad Carnival: A Quest for National Identity* (1997), Tejaswini Niranjana's *Mobilizing India: Women, Music and Migration between India and Trinidad* (2006), and Alvin Magid's *Urban Nationalism* (1988). Harvey Neptune's *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (2007), was published by a U.S. press, and Neptune is a Trinidadian, but works in the United States.

In the increasingly globalized academic community, there is nothing remarkable in non-Trinidadians/West Indians studying Trinidad's culture. What is remarkable is that the production of the foreign academics is not matched by local academics. In effect the conversation on culture has not kept up with progressive scholarship. Trinidadian scholarly collections that illustrate the continuation of this agenda include: *Music, Memory, Resistance: Calypso and the Caribbean Literary Imagination* (2007); *Globalization, Diaspora, Caribbean Popular Culture* (2004); and *Culture In Action: The Trinidad Experience* (2004). All these books were about Carnival; all were largely celebrative.

Indeed, surveying books, attending conferences, and auditing the content of the University of the West Indies intellectual production and output in the humanities, one is left with the distinct impression that the Cultural Studies agenda is to establish Caribbean culture as being in step with with metropolitan culture, and as "equal to," despite its deficiencies in cadres of academics, higher education institutions, subdisciplinary specializations, and its conscious choice of a very limited range of study. All this is despite the fact that the English-speaking West Indies now produces significant transnational products in popular music, consumes international media, is immured in Internet technologies, and seems to have a considerable sphere of alternative sexualities which is only just beginning to be openly discussed, amidst much resistance from academia,⁵ government, and other institutions. (Thomas Glave's anthology of queer texts, *Our Caribbean*, was published in 2008.)

The idea of an agenda of manipulating discourse (proposed explicitly by Gilroy) suggests a specific, if not organized grouping. As Gordon Lewis put it, "the transfer of power from the old empires ... thus means little more, in social power terms, than *the consolidation of the ruling class hold* [and] a

5. There has been no research on academia's homophobia, but this describes my personal experience lecturing to postgraduate students at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, who are influenced and hand-picked by lecturers who are born-again Christians, and openly contemptuous of homosexuality. And, of course, Jamaica's homophobia is well established in regional lore by entertainers like Buju Banton. See Donna Chambers 2008:94-114.

nascent middle class using independence as a ladder to government, civil service and diplomatic appointments" (emphasis added). For the West Indian population the change "means simply a change of masters only" (Lewis 1996:513). The reason is evident but unpleasant: once in power, the regimes consisting of the formerly colonized immediately took steps to ensure their rules for life, and kept the old social rules and values (ethnicity, class, and color) in the new paradigm.

Derek Walcott in his seminal essay "What the Twilight Says" is more explicit in identifying the "new Brown meritocracy" in Trinidad whose agenda was to "politically educate the peasant but to leave him intellectually unsoiled" (Walcott 1998:31). Percy Hintzen and others described it as "the politicization of black identity" which combined with the "Westminster model of parliamentary democracy inherited from Britain" to form "an instrument of regulation for the country's elite" (Hintzen 2003:399).

In short, values and ways of being, thinking, and feeling (i.e., culture) of the populations were manipulated by their own privileged classes, to preserve a political status quo similar to the colonial one. Hence critics not aligned with this movement, and immured in its epistemology, have been looking at the society and coming to the same conclusions for almost a century-and-a-half.

Naturally, a necessary part of the postcolonial power retention strategy was the neutralization of the political-social critique which demonstrated, or revealed, the now entrenched local power groups as immoral and culpable in the heightened disintegration of the former colonies. This neutralization strategy is visible in the responses to the agents who attempted to provide this critique: Lloyd Best and the New World Group, V.S. Naipaul in his novels *The Mimic Men* and *Guerillas* and Derek Walcott in poems like "The Spoiler's Return," "The Schooner *Flight*," and his major essays "What the Twilight Says: An Overture" and "The Muse of History" (Walcott 1992; 1998).

Best was celebrated but ignored by academia and government. Naipaul has been universally reviled as a "racist." And Walcott's life in Trinidad was one of endless frustration which he documented in his work. It is as a member of this group – which exposed the local variant of the "culture industry" and its effects – that Rohlehr has never been located, or studied, until now.

From essays in the collections already identified, I will attempt to extricate the ideas relevant to the "culture industry." They include (to repeat): a) a colonially originated schizophrenia and mental instability as determinants of the discourses and practices of West Indian culture and society; b) the use of history, and epistemology, as weapons and the devaluation of intellectuality linked to the political status quo; and c) the manipulation of material culture and the distortion of folk culture by government and state authorities for political purposes.

Certainly there exists a danger of rewriting Rohlehr's work in the image of my own project, but my reading and writing here do not decontextualize the

ideas. I merely foreground marginal themes whose repetition constitutes an irresistible invitation to de-center the work from its Carnival-calypto center.

ANTECEDENTS: J.J. THOMAS, C.L.R. JAMES, V.S. NAIPAUL

The nineteenth-century Trinidadian linguist and philologist J.J. Thomas remains most celebrated for *Froudacity* (1889), his rebuttal of British historian J.A. Froude's unflattering assessment of the late-nineteenth-century colonial West Indies in his book *The Bow of Ulysses: The British in the West Indies* (1888).

Thomas was a savant, and arguably the first fully formed "organic" Trinidad intellectual and is generally regarded as a proto-nationalist (by Benn 2004) and as an ethnic nationalist (by Smith 2002), but these are misleading conclusions – a product of the postcolonial knowledge economy (which I described earlier) which requires that historical and cultural phenomena should be interpreted according to ethnic and/or "nationalist" themes.

In fact, Thomas (like his intellectual descendants) would be better qualified as an *internationalist*. Writing about the "Nationality of Negroes" in the Trinidadian *New Era* newspaper on September 23, 1872, Thomas warned his readers against insularity in formulating ideas of nation and self:

Greece borrowed letters and science from Phoenicia and Egypt; Rome, intellectual culture from Greece, and all the nations of civilized Europe are debtors to Rome on similar grounds. That we should rebel against this law of international borrowing would be a manifestation of self-sufficiency as unprecedented as it would be fatal.

Thomas's racial views were equally ahead of their time. Though he was conscious of and took pride in his racial origins, in discussing the colony's racial situation in the same newspaper (on September 14, 1874), he reveals "complexional prejudice" within the island's black community:

color prejudice is a ladder with almost numberless rungs. It is a system of social segregation and retaliation. Favoritism, sycophancy, levity and a cravenness too base to be characterized, have made its [*sic*] highest standpoint a tower of strengths from which its influence on imitative persons, according to the degree to which their blood is diluted, operates in a manner which some deplore, and all can but too well appreciate.

As to the antinomies of these dysfunctions, "Social Contrasts" (published in the *New Era* between October 4 and November 4, 1875) prescribed "life and civilized citizenship" and the development of the "higher life of

the community,” via books, classical learning, and the European intellectual tradition – echoing Arnoldian values. Thomas identified three traits in Trinidadians which he said worked against the interests of civilized citizenship: “*Bambilouism*, White-eariness, and Egotism.” He wrote: “The moral and social traits of the *bambilou* may be symbolized by a compounding of the visible qualities of the Chameleon and the Ape.” Such a person, he continued, is obsessed with status, and to achieve it copies the traits of others (the British) with “a grotesque earnestness.” Such men are “a set of lifelong carnivalists with all the bizarre but none of the intentional ridiculousness of genuine masqueraders.” Thomas continues in similar vein expounding white-earism (cowardice) and egotism.

In a later article, in the *New Era* (June 7, 1880), Thomas provides a glimpse of his life by recounting the experiences he most valued: contemplation of the classics through reading, discussion, and intellectual cultivation. He was also a founder of the Trinidad Athenaeum, a literary society.⁶ (Another important association, which is strangely absent from the published material on Thomas, is that he was a Freemason, inducted into the Lodge Eastern Star in Trinidad, in August 1873.⁷ Doubtless, this contributed to Thomas’s views on internationalism, and the idea of knowledge transferred from civilization to civilization.⁸)

Even from this brief survey, three themes in Thomas’s work are apparent: the psychological distortions, including racial neurosis, that colonial cultural exchange produces on native minds; a prescience of the importance of history and epistemology in ordering social life; and recognizing the importance of a broad spectrum of the humanities as a bulwark of civilization.

Thomas’s ideas recur through Trinidadian intellectuals’ conclusions to the present. Lloyd Brathwaite in his seminal essay, *Social Stratification in Trinidad* (1953), described the features of the colonial Trinidadian middle class as either “compulsive conformists” or “radicals.” These (black and mixed-race middle-class) men were all obsessed with whiteness and light-colored skin, and possessed traits of cowardice and egotism which caused them to seek power for their own ends, and use it sadistically and primarily for their own satisfaction and vindication (Brathwaite 1953:109-12).

Concerning this recognition of imitation and personality distortion it should be evident that what Thomas and Brathwaite described was later dramatized by their fellow Trinidadian, V.S. Naipaul, in his novel *The Mimic*

6. Formation of the Athenaeum reported in the *Trinidad Chronicle*, November 12, 1872, and Thomas’s obituary published in the *New Era*, October 25, 1889.

7. This information was found in membership lists provided by the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

8. This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 4 of my unpublished PhD thesis (see Ramcharitar 2008a).

Men. It is remarkable, and emblematic of the central problematic (of evading the potentially discomfiting conclusions that result from cultural analysis) mentioned in the introduction, that there has been no local disinterested examination of Naipaul's formulation, but much ire and personal insult insinuated in its wake. (A theoretical examination was undertaken by Homi Bhabha in his essays "Mimicry and Man" and "Sly Civility" in *The Location of Culture* [2004]. Walcott's essay "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry" [1974], remains the exception.) Conversely, C.L.R. James's *Beyond a Boundary* is celebrated as one of the great cricket books, but its praise of aspirations to Britishness and its acceptance of colonial status norms, like the high value attached to white- and light-skinnedness, are ignored. Though in his *The Case for West Indian Self Government* (1933) and *Party Politics in the West Indies* (1962) James's critique of the Philistine "brown" middle class was scathing and congruent with Naipaul's and Thomas's.

The theme of the value of "Eurocentric" knowledge, which was set against an unspecified philistinism and shallowness in Thomas and James, remained an issue post-independence, when it was dichotomized against "folk" knowledge. The conflict has been a running theme in the region's postcolonial academic and political discourse. It is discussed in Derek Walcott's seminal essay, "What the Twilight Says: An Overture," and in "The Muse of History" as well as exhaustively discussed in his creative work. These themes also recur in Lloyd Best's oeuvre, like his major essay "Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom" (2003) and his journals *New World Quarterly*, *Tapia*, and the *Trinidad & Tobago Review*.

A good illustration of Best's style and preoccupations can be found in a newspaper column headlined "Laventille Man," published in the *Trinidad Express* on November 8, 1994. He wrote, on the problems facing the region, with reference to the education system:

Might it not be significant that the accent is so heavy on rigor and discipline and so light on the romance and enchantment that learning also entails? ... In the most astonishing places we find a resignation to – if not quite a contentment with – the terrors and traumas of materialist society ... The post-independence theme has been enduring paralysis, stasis, at least, a crisis of non-implementation and institutional atrophy. The emerging option is authoritarian command, slavery in a different guise – or anarchy.

The themes of the seemingly endless failure of authoritarianism without its antinomy of Romanticism, and the distortions this leads to – a resignation to terror and trauma – echo, more subtly, those raised by Thomas, Walcott, James. Naipaul and others similarly oriented by their Arnoldian education and socio-historical location. And it is here that Rohlehr is most at home, sustaining and extending this critical position.

ROHLER'S CONTRIBUTION:
PSYCHOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

Rohlehr's early essays are a blend of cultural archaeology and literary criticism – making links between social sensibility through poems and individuals like Derek Walcott, Wayne Brown, and Eric Roach⁹ and networks of forgotten publications, literary circles, and social movements like *Pivot*, *Embryo*, and *Kairi*, which transmitted the social-cultural discourse of the 1970s and 1980s.

In his "History as Absurdity" a literary evaluation of Eric Williams's *From Columbus to Castro*, he examines the use of history as a weapon, and provides a psychological profile based on Eric Williams's narcissistic obsession with using it for revenge: "Dr Williams ... still conceives history-writing as the gathering together of a stockpile of facts to be hurled like brickbats against the dead and living imperialists" (MSC 21). The essay also reads like a Fanonian case study, as he details "the daydream the colonial always has, of humiliating massa" in Williams's work, and comments upon the colonial's "blend of love, hatred and contempt for both black and white" (MSC 26). He also links Williams's psychosis to Naipaul's in the desire for power, revenge, and fulfillment in the bosom of the colonizer.

The themes of psychological distortion, and specifically of schizophrenia, recur in many forms, involving literary analysis, individual personalities, and mass behavior. Literarily, the term was used in describing Walcott's and other poets' racial division, being torn between styles and drawn to black and white antecedents (MSC 58), and his embrace of the stereotype of the "tragic mulatto" (MSC 148). In "Man Talking to Man," Rohlehr notes in the 1970s, even the calypsonians, staunch black nationalists, and PNM loyalists, could no longer reconcile the dissonances between rhetoric and reality, and began to conclude that "madness" was the explanation for the "bewildering paradoxes of civic life." As the decade progressed, "[r]eflections on the rumored madness of the leader eventually became contemplation of the *literal madness visible on the streets*" [emphasis added]. This created a broken, dispirited citizen which led to the general breakdown of trust, sentience, and eventually, by 1990, of society (MSC 331, 335).

Psychosocial distortion had also afflicted the masses, via colonial discursive strategies from the first decades of the twentieth century: "Propaganda against

9. Eric Roach was a talented and undervalued Tobagonian poet, admired by Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite during his lifetime, but who never met with success or recognition, and took his own life in 1974. His value has only recently begun to be recognized and celebrated. Peepal Tree Press has published a collection titled *The Flowering Rock: Collected Poems 1938-1974* (1992), and Laurence Breiner's study, *Black Yeats: Eric Roach and the Politics of Caribbean Poetry* (2008). Brown would later win the Commonwealth Prize for Poetry with his collection *On the Coast* (1974).

non-European styles and customs had permeated the society at every level, so the keepers of the tradition themselves were ambivalent about its deeper aspects.” Thus “the grassroots absorbed and disseminated comic caricatures of their own image which they had derived from the country’s ruling elite.” The revival and recovery of this knowledge decades later was infused with a pervasive ambiguity, and ambivalence, as to what was folk and what was fake, which was exploited by the postnationalist bourgeoisie (TSH 170-72).

A later essay, “Drums and Minuet: Music, Masquerade and the Mulatto of Style” returns to literary schizophrenia from another vantage – the cultural politics of aesthetic choice among a few writers, and musicians, with regard to their being of mixed race. Rohlehr examines Derek Walcott, Philip Pilgrim, Arthur Seymour, Lorna Goodison, Edgar Mittelholzer, Dennis Scott, and Victor Questel (TTT 82-111).

The theme of colonial distortion in the essays from the 1970s and 1980s materializes in two other motifs: intellectual impotence leading to apocalypse, the culmination of the mental and social distortion. “Man Talking to Man” mentions in passing that by 1966, there had occurred, via calypso, the “equating of intellectuality with impotence.” This was instigated, he implies, by Williams’s attacks on the University of the West Indies and indigenous intellectual pursuits. He reported on the University of the West Indies of the early 1970s that:

Lecturers have been expelled for alleged subversive activity and in the Trinidad of 1970, University personnel have been detained on the most fantastic charges and released because Dr Williams himself, now in his guise of Minister of National Security could discover no adequate grounds upon which to hold them (MSC 45).

In “My Strangled City” which examines the art, society, and some personalities and issues which shaped the decade 1964-75, he would mention in passing the continued assault on “[s]mall, impotent groups of guilt-ridden intellectuals throughout the region who display a certain amount of political consciousness” (MSC 214). The center of this dysfunction, he writes (summarizing the assessments of various poets), was/is the University of the West Indies, Mona, campus of the 1950s and 1960s, where the inheritors of the colonial power structure created “a narcissistic prison, a generator of fixed formulae and stereotyped vision” (TSH 219).

Two tragic figures of the 1970s embody the destructive mental effects of postcolonial distortion: critic/poets Victor Questel and Eric Roach. They recur in the essays of the period, and are the subjects of individual essays: “Three for V” and “A Carrion Time,” critical elegies to these figures’ lives, work, and deaths. Rohlehr’s summation (in “Afterthoughts”) of the artist’s fate in such an environment was dark indeed: “if a finer spirit emerges from

the carrion of our present, it will be won at the expense of individual defeat, sacrifice, tiredness of the spirit and sickness unto death" (MSC 134).

The larger consequences of this psychological distortion come in the flowering of apocalypse, the 1990 coup, when an Islamist terrorist organization stormed the Parliament and murdered, or caused the murders, of one parliamentarian, dozens of civilians, instigated the destruction of billions of dollars worth of property, and the traumatization of thousands of people.

Rohlehr's examination of the calypsonians' response to 1990 is tinged with asperity at the consequences of a society which held intellectuals in contempt, and which remained emotionally and epistemologically distorted by colonialism. The calypsonians saw "little reason they should present balanced or factually accurate accounts of social and political experience" and "assumed a right to a one-sided monopoly of discourse every bit as authoritarian as the power structure [they] attack" (TSH 335). In this milieu, university lecturers and calypsonians agreed that Abu Bakr, the leader of the criminals, was a hero, and the society had become one whose "social and cultural mechanisms are all attuned to the task of evading moral responsibility and side-stepping moral commitment" (TSH 345).

This summation – the impotence and devaluation of things intellectual and intellectuals, psychological distortion, and social disintegration – leads to the question: in the absence of the intellectuals, intellectual material, and epistemological guideposts, what was filling the discursive void and programming these social phenomena? The answer is the Trinidad Culture Industry.

THE TRINIDAD CULTURE INDUSTRY

In "West Indian Poetry: Some Problems of Assessment," Rohlehr notes that post-1970 Trinidad saw a burgeoning youth movement engaged in a critical examination of their cultural antecedents, aimed at political change, which resulted in the "arrests, detentions, shootings and tribunals" of and for its leaders (MSC 127). The youth were encouraged by a pivotal American film, *Woodstock* (based on the hippie festival) which encouraged escapism through drugs and other diversions of the era. Following on this, Rohlehr observed, "all sorts of people have encouraged *Woodstock*-type gatherings in Trinidad, from businessmen who were planning a sit-in at Wallerfield in 1970 to the ruling Peoples National Movement" and "attempts to control folk consciousness by sponsorship" which all amounted to a "sickening political gimmickry which ... seeks to control every response of youth" (MSC 127). In "Afterthoughts," he writes that this state-strategy could become "tragic when folk art begins to be used as a tourist attraction or to gain a few more votes" (MSC 134). And yet later, in an interview ("The Space Between Negations"), he would conclude that "the Best Village" (a folk festival sponsored by the

government) “provides temporary exhibitionist visibility and functions as a palliative against government indifference. Best Village is thus no more than a political circus” (TSH 124).

In “My Strangled City” Rohlehr elaborates further how folk culture was used politically: the local revolutionary intentions of the Black Power Revolution of the 1970s were transmuted into an adjunct of Afro-American “Soul Culture,” and “for the rest of the 1970s these [soul] sessions were encouraged by the establishment as a means of channeling dissent and by 1971, various aspects of folk, urban and youth culture were employed as gimmicks” (MSC 178).

Some of these gimmicks were more elaborate than others. Censorship and oppression could, if necessary, escalate to murder. In “The Shape of that Hurt” describing the means by which the state suppressed voices of change, like Walter Rodney’s, Rohlehr notes that: “The state could not foster such voices. Where necessary it imprisoned or muzzled them and under extreme circumstances, assassinated the voice. What the State did with great efficiency was to promote Carnivals and festivals throughout the region” (TSH 174).

In “Literature and the Folk” he elaborates on the use of the appropriated calypso (and folk culture generally) in the independence cultural regime: calypsonians “provided a sounding board by which all ‘intruders’ on the urban scene were placed,” and the calypsonians’ role in calling Indo citizenship into question (MSC 61-64). He develops the theme in “Man Talking to Man” noting that anticolonialist calypsonians became statist cheerleaders who “legitimized the party and defended it against incipient dissent by opposition forces” (MSC 326). He also, in this remarkable essay, begins to treat the calypso as a mass medium, and examine the construction of image and propagation of values via the medium – a move which, apparently, none of his contemporaries noticed, since there has been no follow-up to this idea.¹⁰

Clearly Rohlehr saw that Carnival and the folk were being proposed as means of control and substitutes for intellectual endeavor which could precipitate political change. By 1990, in retrospect, he labeled this period as one which saw the emergence of what he labeled “grassroots hucksterism” which derived from the cultural energies of Black Power being fused with the ethnic exigencies of the PNM, to result in the “rage which always seems to be smoldering in the breasts of the dispossessed [not being] released against the old PNM,” and the “children of the Black Power era whose loyalty was given not to Geddes Granger/Makandal Daaga of the NJAC but the PNM” (TSH 308).

In “The Culture of Williams: Context, Legacy, Performance,” Rohlehr was able to refine and distil all these themes into a causative algorithm: “the active measures adopted by the five successive governments over which Dr

10. Rohlehr acknowledges Frank Manning’s essay on calypso as a medium of communication in Serlin & Soderlund 1991. My own study of the Trinidadian media (Ramcharitar 2005) is the only work I know of which has acknowledged this essay.

Williams presided, to translate watchwords and national slogans into *lived cultural reality*" (emphasis added). This essay recapitulates the history of post-independence detailing how PNM policy helped create "a nation of animated puppets in what some have portrayed as a *danse macabre* and others as a theatre of the post-colonial Absurd" (SI 102-3).

It should be clear from this that Rohlehr on the one hand celebrates and documents the value of the folk, its development, and practitioners. On the other, he recognizes its vulnerabilities and its "capture" by the state. The question is not why has this counterdiscourse not been recognized in Rohlehr's work; this has already been answered. The question is what the consequences of this lack of an overarching academic discourse – which would have recognized, discussed, and documented this long before now – have been.

COUNTERCULTURAL STUDIES

Raymond Williams's remarkable work, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (1983), proposed that British culture was shaped by a series of discourses, texts and ideas contained and transmitted in books, architecture, newspapers, and works of literature and visual art. For each historical period, he examined the main ideas of the period and how they interacted dialectically with critiques and opposing ideas, and new positions emerged.

Of importance here is that large ideas were constantly challenged, dissembled, and replaced or modified to suit new exigencies. In describing the similarity in the prognosis of the problems and their causes between J.J. Thomas and Gordon Rohlehr and a series of great minds in between, it seems that the fundamental power relationships of small elites manipulating oppressed masses has not changed. The question thus arises: does this mean that there has been no fundamental change in the ideas that have guided and shaped Trinidad?

The obvious answer would be, "Yes." The reasons for this are not difficult to extricate. Why the power relationship has not changed has already been dealt with by Fanon, Brathwaite, and Naipaul: the psychic and psychological damage wrought by colonialism have not yet been exorcised, through the obsessive reliving of the colonialist psychic drama by ruling elites who have held power since Independence. They have, by force, institutional manipulation, and academic suppression, orchestrated a Foucauldian suppression of knowledge (as the academics deride Foucault and other European thinkers like Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari as "irrelevant"),¹¹ in effect keeping the

11. These thinkers are not randomly selected: Deleuze and Guattari are important for their effect on Caribbean theorists like Édouard Glissant and Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Foucault was extensively cited by Northover & Crichtlow, cited herein, and his ideas of "suppressed knowledges" and power relations between marginal and central groups are indispensable to Caribbean historiography, as is Derrida's famous textual strategy of deconstruction.

questions about artistic issues, political issues, and social problems the same and not acknowledging changing realities.

The eternal questions seem to be about race, oppression, folk-nationalism, and commerce – because the answers are standardized by the state, and lead to a nihilistic tribalism which preserves the socioeconomic status quo. A UWI academic, Susan Burke, speaking at a Carnival, multiculturalism, and tourism forum at the University of the West Indies in February 2011, said:

Carnival can be used as a vista through which we can reflect, reformulate or reset our approaches towards the arts and cultural industries in general ... the Carnival gives some insight into the country in general and the cultural industries in particular ... Carnival as a magical mirror. Carnival shows us who we are as a society.¹²

There could be no clearer vindication of Rohlehr's fears articulated in 1970, about the folk becoming immured in, and seeing as its purpose, the state's tourism agenda – devaluing education and deriding intellectualism, and dogmatizing history and art as vehicles for ethnic and “nationalistic” vindication.

To be sure, there were developments and digressions in Rohlehr's oeuvre: his post-1990 essays, mainly contained in *A Scuffling of Islands*, look at calypso's reinvention of itself, and the emergence of calypsonians as political and moral critics, and even prophets. And, as already stated, from Rohlehr's last collection (TTT), it seems that his perspective has shifted into themes of personal, rather than larger social significance.

CONCLUSION

The network of ideas relevant to the study of culture, repeated in Rohlehr's essays from 1970-2004, have not been adequately (if at all) engaged by regional academia, past or present. This is because of the University of the West Indies' late “discovery” of cultural studies, its inadequate grasp of the discipline, and its evasion of the devastating critique its application to West Indian reality precipitates, since this critique indicts the classes or cliques to which the academics belong. The cost of this failure is the lack of viable public policy alternatives, and an impoverishment of social discourse.

This means that the region is not producing knowledge to assist in its self-understanding. This mirrors the independence and post-independence situations, where much of the empirical data (statistical, survey, ethnographic, and participant observation) which formed the intellectual independence

12. The presentation can be viewed in its entirety at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8KDe8KEtdc>.

discourse in Trinidad was mined and refined by non-Trinidadians including (not exhaustively) Vera Rubin and the RISM, Ivar Oxaal, Morton Klass, Yogendra Malik, Arthur and Juanita Niehoff, and Gordon Lewis. Certainly there are exceptions: Selwyn Ryan's books and edited collections also recognize the need to untangle the knotty social relations that constitute a complex society. These include *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad* (1972), *Social Stratification In Trinidad & Tobago: Revisited* (1991), *Deadlock* (2002), and his edited collections on the 1990 coup, the 1970 Black Power movement, and the independence experience. Ramesh Deosaran has attempted to provide data on pressing social issues like crime and poverty. Deosaran's study of the 1990 coup, *A Society Under Siege: A Study of Political Confusion and Legal Mysticism* (1993), and his edited collection, *Crime, Delinquency and Justice: A Caribbean Reader* (2007) are also commendable attempts (though of uneven quality) to extricate meaning from tortured experience.

At the University of the West Indies, Cultural Studies in practice is indistinguishable from cultural/political populism. This is visible in academics who say openly and without a trace of irony that calypsonians ought to be given the status of social scientists;¹³ a senior citizen who dons an ethnic costume and acquires from the national museum, which apparently does little else, the title of "master artist" and is feted with a month of celebration sponsored by state, university, and international agencies;¹⁴ in academic and cultural agencies claiming to represent to the whole of "Caribbean culture" organized and run by members of small class-located elites, who nakedly foreground their own, and their accomplices' interests and networks, and receive massive funding from state and international agencies;¹⁵ and writers noted for their "resistance" to all and sundry oppressive forces and discourses being on the state's payroll¹⁶ – all this without a dissenting word, or even a recognition of the enormity.

13. Hollis Liverpool (aka calypsonian "Chalkdust"), director of the University of Trinidad and Tobago's Academy of Arts, Letters, Culture and Public Affairs made these statements at a lecture at the Trinidad National Library on July 3, 2008. It was reported in the *Trinidad Newsday* on July 13, 2008, Section A, p. 19 in an article by Kevin Baldeosingh. Liverpool made the same argument, less directly, in Pouchet-Paquet 2007.

14. Leroy Clarke, a Trinidadian painter, and the country's most high-profile Afrocentrist (he dresses in African garb, he acquired the title of African Chief, and is regularly seen in public via newspaper and television stories) in 2008 proclaimed himself a "Master" and was feted for a month by the Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago, the Trinidad & Tobago Commission for UNESCO, the National Library, and UWI academics. Advertisements were taken out in the press to announce events with these institutions' imprimaturs. For example: *Trinidad Guardian*, November 16, 2008, Section A, p. 37.

15. This refers to the now-defunct CCA7 in Trinidad, described in Ramcharitar 2008b.

16. Earl Lovelace was the artistic director of Carifesta IX. This is not documented on Carifesta's website, but is mentioned in an interview with *Caribbean Beat* magazine: <http://www.mepublishers.com/online/caribbean-beat/archive/index.php?pid=6001&id=cb81-1-54>.

Gordon Rohlehr's accomplishments in mapping this territory are monumental. But monuments can crumble if left untended, isolated, and forgotten. As Paul Gilroy (1993:33-34) put it: "Is this impulse towards cultural protectionism the most cruel trick which the west can play upon its dissident affiliates?"

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SHADOWS OF THE PLANTATION? A SOCIAL HISTORY OF SURINAME'S BAUXITE TOWN MOENGO

My father ... first worked as an indentured laborer at plantation Dordrecht. After his contract period, he went to look for a job to earn more. And he ended up all the way at Moengo. *How did he know that there was work there?* He had heard from others that you could earn lots of money at Moengo. At Dordrecht he earned fifteen cents an hour, at Moengo he could earn sixty cents¹ ... At the time there was no regular boat connection, so he went with people who transported vegetables, rice, and fruit to Moengo ... When he arrived, he had to register as a rower for that merchant. And he couldn't go ashore. He had to stay in the boat at night ... It was wartime, and they watched those people closely. They were afraid of sabotage ... My father happened to know someone at Moengo who helped him with a pass ... And that's how he was able to go and register as jobseeker.

Mr. Kromo, retired Suralco-employee, interview in Paramaribo, July 2008

They first let you come over to get to know the place. I was there for three days, and it really made an impression, you know. They need me here, and it is so pretty ... And you earned so much more. In the city you'd earn 160 as a qualified nurse, but at Moengo you'd get 400 [a month, in 1950] ... If you had seen that little town; it measured up to a foreign city.

Nurse Fernandes, former director of the Moengo hospital and a Suralco staff member; interview in Paramaribo, August 2008

1. In 1943 a field laborer in Moengo earned 36 cents an hour and a mine or mill worker 38 cents an hour according to Lie a Kwie & Esajas (1996:107).

Bauxite has long been a major contributor to Suriname's GDP and the predominant foreign currency earner.² Its importance to Suriname's economy is duly noted in macro-economic reviews.³ It has, however, hardly received attention in historical, sociological, or political studies on Suriname, let alone in studies of a more sociocultural character.⁴ How the mining enclaves of Moengo, Paranam, and Onverdacht functioned, what kind of social life and expectations they generated, and what impact they had on Surinamese society remains unexplored. Using oral narratives about life in the bauxite town of Moengo, as well as census and other statistical data, this article explores to what extent we can discern the shadows of the plantation in Suriname's mining enclaves.

Moengo was Suriname's first mining town; its history coincides with that of bauxite mining in Suriname. Because of its relative isolation and its almost exclusive reliance on the bauxite company, it developed into a company town with elaborate facilities and a unique social history. Moengo constituted a closed, insular enclave which could not easily be accessed and was for a long time highly regulated. Oral history narratives drew attention to the fact that the role of the Company, *de Maatschappij*, was far more than that of just a comparatively well-paying employer, but that it also took on the roles of a police officer, patriarch, and benefactor. They also indicated numerous continuities between the plantation and the mining town in terms of the labor regime and the kinds of socioeconomic and cultural spaces generated. Moengo's history incorporates many of the crucial changes in Surinamese society in the course of the twentieth century. It exemplifies the move away from a plantation economy, yet it also raises questions regarding underlying continuities. It is a recounting of how avenues for social mobility were opened, but also highlights how highly differentiated such opportunities remained.

Even though this article also makes extensive use of census data and other archival sources, it relies primarily on the life story/oral history interviews I conducted between 2006 and 2008 in the context of a research project on Suriname's twentieth-century social history. During the initial round

2. The research on which this article is based was conducted in the context of a larger collaborative project on Suriname's twentieth-century social history, with Rivke Jaffe, Hebe Verrest, and Rosemarijn Hoefte at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV). I am grateful to these colleagues for their support and insightful and encouraging advice. The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) generously financed the project. I also want to thank Ine Apapoe, Yianne Najoe, Denice Gooding, and Reana Burke for their research assistance in Suriname. I am, however, most indebted to the many people who took the time to tell me their personal version of Suriname's twentieth-century history.

3. See, for example, Van Dijk 2001, 2005.

4. But see Hesselink (1974) and the commemorative volume by Lie a Kwie & Esajas (1996), which was commissioned by Suralco.

of interviews in 2006 and 2007 I conducted life story interviews with a broad range of middle-aged to elderly people from different social backgrounds and with different personal trajectories. These interviews started with questions about the place and date of birth, family background, and then followed the interviewees' lead as they recounted their lives. Even though most of the interviews took place in Paramaribo, the life stories of the interviewees covered most of Suriname's differentiated landscape: the districts, the interior, mining towns, and capital city.

From my initial round of eighty interviews, ten interviews discussed life in the mining industry (at Moengo or Paranam) at length. In July and August 2008 I conducted twenty additional oral history interviews with Moengonese in Moengo and in Paramaribo, which focused specifically on different aspects of their lives in the mining town, from people's migration and work histories to experiences of growing up in the company town, social relations and stratification, and Company rules and hierarchies to the impact of the *Binnenlandse Oorlog* (Interior War). Most of these interviews were with men, former Suralco employees of different ages, ranks, and ethnic backgrounds, but I also spoke to ten women who had grown up or lived in Moengo. Only one of these women actually worked for the Company itself, which reflects the highly skewed gender ratio of Company employment.

I conducted the bulk of these interviews in Dutch, and twice in Sranantongo. Two interviews were conducted by assistants in Aukaans, the Ndyuka Maroon language, while I was present and listened in. The interviews generally lasted one to three hours; in a number of cases I conducted follow-up interviews. I have replaced the names of most of my interviewees with pseudonyms.

In the following I first give a brief overview of Suriname's bauxite history. I then turn to Moengo's early period. Who came to work in the enclave and what positions did they find themselves in? Next, I discuss how the enclave was positioned in its wider surroundings. Even though Moengo was closed to anyone but Company employees and their families, it also became a regional center of sorts. In the next sections I turn to the rigorously gendered nature of Moengo's everyday life, and examine social hierarchies, order and discipline in the mining town. Oral history and other sources indicate that, even though discipline on the plant was rigorous, it was never stable but rather continuously contested and in the process of transformation. I end with some reflections on the length of the shadows of the plantation. How far did these shadows – the traces of the racially, hierarchically ordered plantation complex – reach into the social organization of that symbol of modernity, the company town?

PLANTATION ECONOMY PARALLELS

Most Caribbean societies are characterized by extremely dependent economies in which large metropolitan or transnational companies engaged in resource production and extraction play major roles. These particular structures of dependency have deep historical roots in the Caribbean. Since its colonial inception, the area has been structured around limited metropolitan needs.

Plantation economy scholars focused on the ways in which the dominance of metropolitan enterprise impacted Caribbean economies and societies and was conducive to specific hierarchies, norms, and preferences, notably the conflation of race and class, a white bias, and a taste for metropolitan imports.⁵ As Norman Girvan (2006:336) succinctly recapitulates:

Plantation theorists argued that transnational corporations ended up draining capital from the local economy through repatriation of profits, and promoted dependency on imported intermediate inputs and on capital-intensive technology.

Girvan's work (1970, 1975, 2006) highlights the similarities between plantations and mining enclaves, and, at a macro-economic level, economic structures dominated by either plantations or mining. Earlier political-economic structures, including economic dependence and underdevelopment, and racial hierarchies were seen to be reproduced in and through the mineral industry, in what Beckford (2000:253, 300) called "a 'ratooning' of the plantation system."

The shift from sugar to bauxite indeed did little to lessen Suriname's dependent integration into the global economy. Despite the crucial shift from large-scale agricultural enterprises to an agricultural sector dominated by small enterprises and the significant expansion of the government sector after World War II, Suriname's economy continued to depend on large-scale, foreign-owned resource exploitation companies (see Van Dijck 2001, Hoefte & Meel 2001:xiv). To what extent can we discern similar continuities and parallels between the plantation and the mining enclave in terms of social organization and sociocultural stratification?

SURINAME'S BAUXITE

While in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century Suriname's sugar industry steadily declined, large bauxite deposits were discovered in the early twentieth century. Alcoa, already the major American

5. See, e.g., Best 2005 together with Levitt 1978, Beckford 2000, and Girvan 1970, 1975, 2006.

bauxite company at the time, had contrived to acquire widespread concessions in areas where bauxite deposits were suspected. The terms under which the Surinaamsche Bauxiet Maatschappij (SBM; renamed Suralco in 1957), the Surinamese subsidiary of Alcoa, could operate were extremely favorable until the mid-1970s. These terms were repeatedly subject to debates in the Surinaamse Staten (the local parliament), but Dutch interventions restricted renegotiations (Lamur 1985).

In 1920 the SBM started mining bauxite at Moengo, the isolated location of what was once a Maroon village in the east of the country (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996, Oudschans Dentz 1921). Over the years Moengo developed into a full-fledged company town. Adjacent to Moengo proper, a more informal, largely Javanese settlement came into being around 1930. Wonoredjo was declared an official village community in 1941.⁶ The number of inhabitants of Moengo/Wonoredjo grew from 2,687 in 1950, to 5,320 in 1964 and 6,633 inhabitants in 1971 (see Table 1). Mining soon came to dominate the otherwise sparsely populated district of Marowijne.

Table 1. Number of residents in bauxite towns*

Town	1950	1964	1971
Moengo	2,687	5,320	6,633
Billiton	923	3,126	2,721
Paranam	1,399	2,634	3,093
Total	5,009	11,080	12,447

Source: Census of 1950, 1964, and 1971.

* Because of changes in the enumeration districts between 1950 and 1964, and the different treatment of "bushland population" in all three years, the data are not fully comparable.

From the 1920s onward exports rose quickly, and in the 1940s Suriname became one of the largest producers of bauxite worldwide. While bauxite production and the number of employees showed great fluctuations over time, the overall trend was one of production growth. The economic crisis caused a temporary slump in production, and a reduction of the number of employees from 700 to 290 in the early 1930s (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:68), but by the late 1930s production had picked up, and in 1942 it reached unprecedented heights due to heavy demand from the U.S. war industry (ESWIN 1956:119, Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:72). The number of people employed in the baux-

6. *Verslag der Handelingen van de Staten van Suriname (Handelingen)* p. 98 and *Bijlagen* (24.1-3).

ite sector increased sharply, from 954 in 1939 to 2,634 in 1942 (Ramsoedh 1990:155, *Surinaams Verslag* 1940, 1944).

In 1939 SBM started developing another mining location, Paranam, upstream of Paramaribo on the Suriname River, where it was soon joined by the Dutch Billiton company, which developed operations at nearby Onverdacht. The center of Suriname's mining sector shifted from Moengo to Paranam/Onverdacht, even more so when a hydroelectric dam, an alumina factory, and an aluminum smelter, financed by Suralco in exchange for new bauxite concessions, were built at Paranam in the early 1960s (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:80).⁷ Both Paranam and Onverdacht developed into company towns, but they remained relatively small, as their proximity to the city allowed workers to commute from Paramaribo (see De Bruijne 1976:72-73).

Table 2. Distribution of mining personnel per district in 1964

District	Most likely employed at:	% of all employees in mining sector (n=5570)
Marowijne	Moengo	17
Suriname	Billiton/Paranam	43
Paramaribo	Billiton/Paranam, Paramaribo headquarters and dam construction in Brokopondo	28
Brokopondo	Dam construction in Brokopondo	10
Total		98

Source: 1964 Census.

Due to its capital-intensive nature the bauxite sector remained a relatively modest source of employment. High capital investments allowed for increased production without concomitant increases in employment. While the mining sector provided between 5 percent and 8 percent of all employment in the years 1953-82 (Buddingh' 1995:310), in 2006 it employed merely 3 percent of the economically active population (Ferrier 2007:24). Yet since the industry is heavily dominated by men, these figures understate the importance of the mining sector as an employer for the male labor force: in 1964 it employed 10 percent of all employed men (ABS 1964).

In 1941 Suriname was the origin of 88 percent of American bauxite imports and in 1948 of 82 percent, but the country steadily lost that premier position with the rise of other, cheaper sources.⁸ Whereas in 1950 it still produced 30 percent of the world's bauxite, in 1991 Suriname's share had dropped to 3

7. Table 2 details the distribution of mining employees in 1964.

8. *Minerals Yearbook* (1941:656 and 1949:168), <<http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/usbmmyb.html>>, accessed February 21, 2011.

percent (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:244). In terms of Suriname's GDP, bauxite and alumina production remained paramount. From the 1930s onward, bauxite and bauxite products have represented the single largest export product and contributor to the GDP (Van Dijck 2001:57). While the relative importance of bauxite exports has decreased in the last two decades, extractive industries have taken on renewed importance due to the booming oil sector and more recently the large-scale mining of gold (Van Dijck 2001, 2005).

A MINING ENCLAVE IN THE JUNGLE

Much-traveled Dutch civil servant and writer Fred Oudschans Dentz visited Moengo in 1919 or 1920, when only part of the settlement had been finished. He spoke enthusiastically of the founding of Moengo as "an adventure story, a piece of modern history and a monument to the willpower and perseverance of the Americans" (Oudschans Dentz 1921:485). He was clearly impressed by the U.S. accomplishments and the modern, all-encompassing organization of the production process, labor force, and village. The village that was created on the banks of the Cottica River, isolated in the jungle of Eastern Suriname, was designed for 1,000 workers, who "with women and children" would make up a population of 4,000 people (Oudschans Dentz 1921:486). According to Oudschans Dentz, the Americans implemented a wide-ranging and highly advanced sanitary infrastructure, using their experiences in other labor enclaves in tropical areas, such as Panama and Cuba. This infrastructure included a system for drinking water, indoor sanitary facilities and a sewage system, anti-malaria measures, and a hospital. There were advanced plans for a power station that would supply electricity to the town, the factory, and the water supply (Oudschans Dentz 1921:488-90). Moengo's modern infrastructure outshone that of the capital, as did, apparently, some of the company equipment. "Calculators are as yet unknown in Paramaribo, and typewriters are busily typing away in this small distant town in the jungle," writes Oudschans Dentz (1921:502).

From Oudschans Dentz's account we can conclude that Moengo's almost entirely male population of 474 consisted of 22 U.S. citizens and 57 "foreign whites," most likely French deportees (see Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:48), as well as almost 300 Surinamese, some 50 workers from the British West Indies, and some 40 Javanese (Oudschans Dentz 1921:491). Oudschans Dentz mentions that the Company employed Amerindians as lumberjacks and had made arrangements with local Maroons for the supply of wood. SBM further employed some 150 carpenters, mostly hailing from Paramaribo. Regarding administrative jobs, he writes: "It goes without saying that a many people have found employment with the company, even if the leading posts remain in American hands ... Surinamese have never had similar opportunities for

well-paid, subordinate posts. Now that these are available, they leave their scantily paid jobs in the private sector or with the government” (Oudschans Dentz 1921:502). According to Oudschans Dentz the wages at Moengo were significantly higher than those paid in other sectors and companies.

Indentured laborers from the Netherlands East Indies made up a significant part of Moengo’s early workforce. The SBM concluded a contract with the government for 400 “Javanese” laborers (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:45). Between February and August 1920 three ships carried 251 laborers who had signed five-year contracts to work at Moengo (Burside 1986:5). Little is known about this group of indentured laborers who, instead of signing up for work at one of Suriname’s plantations, ended up in the newly established mining enclave. The digitized Immigration Register contains the records of 110 of the laborers who were contracted to work at Moengo: 51 women and 59 men.⁹ These included at least 9 young children, including the later political leader Salikin Hardjo (Bruinessen 2001). It is striking that most indentured laborers were in their twenties or early thirties and that many were married and came with their partners. It seems that the Company had specifically requested married couples, hoping they would make for a reliable and possibly self-reproducing workforce. Oudschans Dentz (1921:504) does indeed mention such a Company policy, and according to Hoeft (1998:108), government policies similarly promoted the recruitment of married couples as indentured laborers.

Salikin Hardjo’s father arrived in Suriname in 1920 after he had signed a five-year contract to work as a mechanic at Moengo. His story gives a glimpse into early life at Moengo. Hardjo’s father followed the example of a friend who had been contracted to work as an electrician at Moengo (Bruinessen 2001:6). The two friends were hired as skilled laborers, which was exceptional. Most of Moengo’s indentured laborers were involved in manual occupations: in the mining, transport, and washing of bauxite, as well as the upkeep of the enclave’s vegetable garden (see Hesselink 1974:60, Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:49). “The company was very satisfied with the Javanese laborers,” Lie a Kwie and Esajas (1996:49) note. “Not only were they brought into action in the vegetable garden, but they were also excellent miners, while the women were skillful in washing bauxite.” While the experiment with indentured labor was not continued, the manual labor force would continue to be dominated by Javanese, predominantly ex-indentured laborers from plantations in the neighboring district of Commewijne.

Mr. Ernst was in his late 80s when I interviewed him in Paramaribo in 2008. He lived at Moengo off and on from the late 1920s onward and was one of the few who still remembers what life was like in Moengo before World

9. The *Madioen II*, which carried 151 of Moengo’s indentured laborers, has been omitted from the digitalized Immigration Register, available at http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname/base_java/introductie.html; last accessed December 24, 2010.

War II. "In those days you had to go to Moengo by boat, the *Paramaribo*," he says. "You had one twice a week. So Moengo was an isolated place for those workers, you had nowhere to go. That's why the Americans always ensured the good life there in Moengo." He says that there used to be an *Ons Belang*, a store selling produce from the Company-owned farm. "Everything belongs to the Company. You could go get [your groceries] with a ticket with a number. And every fortnight, they would deduct that from your salary."

Moengo was initially set up in different neighborhoods for different racial groups: a spaciouly laid-out American Quarter and smaller quarters for Surinamese and Javanese laborers (Oudschans Dentz 1921:487). According to Mr. Ernst, "In the old days, there used to be a separate quarter for the foremen. *Sranan Kwatta*, Surinamese Quarter in American ... Common laborers lived on the plant itself." Hardjo's account of his early years at Moengo corroborates Mr. Ernst's description:

On arrival in Moengo the artisans were assigned single-family homes, while the uneducated had to live in long barracks. Since Hardjo's father and his friend Saman were registered as a mechanic and an electrician, they were each assigned such a nice house. "Our house was much better than the one in Java, it was an elevated house," said Salikin Hardjo. "I liked it there, but there were no children. Javanese children were at the other side, near the barracks. And Negro children lived two kilometers further" (Bruinessen 2001:10).

It seems that Hardjo and his family were housed in the Surinamese Quarter, which was reserved for skilled laborers and was set apart from the barracks that housed unskilled laborers. Unskilled laborers were apparently subdivided by race.

Mr. Ernst grew up in a so-called bunkhouse, one of those barracks mentioned by Hardjo, which were subdivided into rows of one-bedroom houses. They were called *dyaris*, yards, and each complex was known by its own name. "You had Bigi Dyari, Ala Dyari. The rows of Bigi Dyari formed a square, with in the middle two bathrooms, four toilets, and two water faucets." Most workers lived in such bunk housing, but Javanese mostly lived in Wonoredjo, he says. I ask him about social distinctions in his youth.

In those days it was a special kind of arrangement. Staff is staff,¹⁰ monthly is monthly, weekly and then the workers ... You couldn't go to where the big staff, Deputy Director Barnett, lived. As boys we also didn't go to

10. *Staf* was used to mean the upper echelons within the Company, the managerial staff. In this article I employ a literal translation of the term, *staff*, since I feel this does most justice to the original usage.

Sranan Kwatta to play ... You could go there to run an errand, maybe you worked for one of those people there.

Oudschans Dentz (1921:490) mentions that the hill on which Moengo was located bordered on a swamp that was going to be drained and the reclaimed land would be made available to Javanese laborers who had completed their contracts. It seems likely that the Company wanted to create a partly self-sustaining pool of labor adjacent to the Company-owned town. This piece of reclaimed land is possibly the origin of the Javanese village of Wonoredjo, Moengo's informal shadow settlement. Some of Moengo's indentured laborers may have been Wonoredjo's founders.

The archives give an impression of the indentured laborers' opportunities for intergenerational social mobility. The Immigration Register includes the record of Bok Soeto, a female indentured laborer from the Semarang district in the Netherlands East Indies who came to Suriname on the *Rotti III* in 1920 to work at Moengo. In 1921 she gave birth to a son, Julius Doelgani, who, according to the 1950 census, would become SBM's telegraph operator.¹¹ Consider also the case of Hendrik Soepeno, who was born in 1922 as the son of another of Moengo's female indentured laborers. In 1950 Soepeno was a Company clerk who had the rank of *maandloner*,¹² which was exceptional among Javanese employees at the time.

FROM THE PLANTATION TO THE MINE

While plantation agriculture continued its steady decline, bauxite replaced sugar as Suriname's major export product. As the demand for bauxite grew in the United States in the late 1930s and the SBM raised bauxite production accordingly, Moengo's population began to grow rapidly. Part of Moengo's workforce hailed from the fledgling plantations, where wages were low, and were lowered even more during the crisis years (Ramsoedh 1990:23-24).

Only the few large-scale agricultural enterprises that were able to introduce the technological innovations required to compete on the world market managed to operate well into the twentieth century. The largest and most significant of these was Mariënborg, a vast plantation with one of the largest, and, at the time, most modern sugar factories in the hemisphere. It relied heavily on cheap labor supplied by indentured laborers from the Dutch East Indies (see Hoeft 1998). In 1918 Mariënborg's division of labor and con-

11. Nationaal Archief, Volkstelling Suriname 1950, nr. 2.10.19.02.

12. *Maandloners* or *maandgelders* were the second-ranking stratum of employees, also called *monthly*, since they were paid on a monthly basis. See p. 21 for a full explanation of terms related to the Company hierarchy.

comitant hierarchies had a clear racial character. Its managerial staff was largely Dutch (and white), while the middle group of overseers was made up of Dutch and Creole men. The skilled laborers were a diverse intermediate group, again consisting of both Dutch and Creole men, though, as Hoeft notes, Javanese and Hindustani men increasingly joined their ranks as clerks from the 1920s onward.¹³ The manual labor force consisted almost exclusively of Javanese indentured laborers, men and women (Hoeft 1998:95).

Mr. Spalding grew up at Mariënborg in the late 1930s and 1940s as the son of a Guyanese sugar boiler and a Surinamese teacher. "At that prosperous time, Mariënborg was the second city after Paramaribo," he says. "It was a flourishing sugar enterprise." It paid very badly, but "Javanese were known to be satisfied with little." With obvious admiration, he recounts how some were able to acquire a Zündapp scooter, although they "hardly had food on the table." And they would proudly display their scooter on the veranda of their house. Mr. Spalding told me that field laborers lived in small bunkhouses. The luxurious staff housing was located away from workers' quarters, separated by a canal, and was off-limits to ordinary workers.

Mr. Spalding decided to become a sugar boiler like his father, thereby breaking with the tradition of hiring expat Guyanese for the position. "It was attractive," he says, "since staff members were regarded highly at Mariënborg. Its staff club was comparable to the Officer's Club in Paramaribo. It was even more modern, more beautiful." After having worked at Mariënborg for some ten years, he left Suriname's fledgling last sugar plantation in the mid-1960s for a job in the potroom at Paranam.

Mr. Spalding was not the only one to leave the plantation for the better-paying mining companies. Many overseers left Mariënborg to work in the bauxite industries from the 1930s onward (Hoeft 1998:99). Field laborers also started to leave the plantation for the mines. For all concerned, the move seems to have meant a significant improvement in wages and facilities. The drift away from the plantation continued until Mariënborg's by then antiquated sugar factory was finally closed in the mid-1980s.

Mrs. Marijke recounts the history of her parents, both children of Javanese indentured laborers, born "on plantation," as Surinamese say. Like Mr. Kromo's father and many other ex-indentured laborers, Marijke's father left the plantation in the 1950s to look for a better-paying job. Mrs. Marijke

13. Suriname is perceived as consisting of a number of *bevolkingsgroepen*, population groups, of a predominantly ethnic nature. The main groups are Creoles (descendants of enslaved Africans who often also claim more mixed origins), Hindustanis (descendants of East Indian indentured laborers), Javanese (descendants of indentured laborers from the Netherlands East Indies), Maroons (descendants of enslaved who fled the plantations), Amerindians, and Chinese (for an extensive discussion of ethnic categories in Suriname, see De Koning 2011a).

remembers the holidays she spent with her grandparents on plantation Zoelen, which was part of the larger Mariënborg complex. She says she only later realized how hard life on plantation had been: the lack of clean drinking water and decent wages, and widespread poverty. "A Javanese woman was lucky if she was employed as a servant or cleaning lady in someone's house, at the plantation owner's. That meant you were well off. My parents weren't in such a favorable position. All this changed when my father had the chance to work as a laborer at Suralco." Her parents began their life as a married couple at Mariënborg, where her father had a job cutting and carrying cane. He did not like it, she says, and went to Paramaribo to look for work. A friend of his told him to come to Moengo.

Mr. Esajas's story reflects another typical trajectory. Mr. Esajas left his native Coronie during the war because he was drafted for the *Schutterij*, the National Guard. After the war ended, he found work at Moengo. "He started out earning 28 cents an hour," his wife remembers. It was slightly better than what he would earn in the city, she says, "but if you found something in the city, you stayed." Like many other new workers, Mr. Esajas started out "weeding," which meant hard physical labor clearing the concession grounds of overgrowth. Depending on one's performance, one was picked out by a manager of one of the departments. "He could not have been there more than a week, and an American passed by who saw him at work. He called his boss and said, 'Can you give me this man? I could use such strong fellows in the mine.' And that's how he went to the mine."

The Company mainly employed "Creole" and "Javanese" men,¹⁴ who made up some 80 percent of the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s. The remainder was made up of "Hindustanis," "[Amer]Indians," "Europeans," "Chinese," and diverse "Others" (Table 6).¹⁵ Moengo's demographics reflect the composition of the workforce. In 1964 the combined population of Moengo and Wonoredjo was made up of 48 percent "Creoles" and 42 percent "Javanese" (Table 3). In 1950, 62 percent of the 1950 Creole population over fifteen was born in Paramaribo, 10 percent in Marowijne, and 9 percent in Commewijne (see Table 4). In contrast 59 percent of all Javanese over fifteen had been born in the Netherlands East Indies and 24 percent in the Commewijne district, which included a large number of people from plantations Mariënborg and Alliance (see Table 5). While most of Moengo's adult

14. I use quotation marks to highlight the fact that these are census categories that univocally categorize a much more complex reality. Not only does such categorization privilege ethnic provenance as a stand-alone explanatory factor, it also assumes that discrete ethnic identities exist, and thereby categorizes mixture out of existence (see De Koning 2011a).

15. In 1964, 49 percent of the workforce was "Creole" and 37 percent "Javanese" (compared with a share of 36 percent and 14 percent in the national population) (Table 6), in 1970 both made up 39 percent (Table 7).

Table 3. Population of Moengo and Wonoredjo in 1950 and 1964 by gender and ethnicity

Race/ Ethnicity	Black/Col. Creole		Hindustani		Javanese		Chinese		[Amer] Indian		European		Other		Total	
	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964	1950	1964
Year																
Male	667	1255	67	185	576	1145	14	32	24	103	11	36	17	13	1376	2769
Female	635	1121	56	158	558	1099	8	27	28	99	16	33	10	14	1311	2551
Total	1302	2376	123	343	1134	2244	22	59	52	202	27	69	27	27	2687	5320
% of population	48%	45%	5%	6%	42%	42%	1%	1%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%	100%	100%

Source: Census of 1950 and 1964.

Table 4. Birthplace of Creoles over 15 at Moengo/Wonoredjo in 1950

Place of Birth	%
Paramaribo	62
Marowijne district	10
Moengo 2%, Albina 2%	
Commewijne district	9
Nickerie district	6
Suriname district	4
Coronie district	5
Abroad	3
Total	99

Figures based on a representative sample of 1950 census data.

Table 5. Birthplace of Javanese over 15 at Moengo/Wonoredjo in 1950

Place of Birth	%
Netherlands Indies	59
District Commewijne	24
Mariënborg 7%; Alliance 4%	
Moengo	3
Suriname district	8
Paramaribo	2
Nickerie district	2
Total	98

Figures based on a representative sample of 1950 census data.

Creole population thus came from the city, a vast majority of the Javanese at Moengo (some 85 percent) seem to have moved from the plantation to the mine, perhaps with a short spell during which they worked in town or had been drafted for military service during World War II. Though geographical proximity played a role, it was particularly the longstanding dominance of plantations and the poor salaries and working conditions they offered Javanese (ex-indentured) laborers that made Commewijne into the primary supplier of unskilled labor to the SBM.

In 1970 Hesselink (1974:72) found that most Javanese employees were children of plantation laborers or peasants, while over half of their Creole colleagues were children of low-level civil servants or artisans. Almost a quarter of the *uurloners* and *weekloners* were natives of Marowijne. This indicates that by that time a considerable number of sons of Suralco employees had taken jobs in the Company, reflecting the Company's preference for family members of employees (Hesselink 1974:72), and indicating the importance of the Company as a facilitator of intra- and intergenerational social mobility.

A BETTER LIFE

I asked Oma how she liked life in Moengo. She said it was like paradise, so tidy. An appreciation of the clean and orderly life in Moengo was common among the people I spoke with (see Hesselink 1974). It often meant the move from a hut made of palm leaves or a small yard-house to first a bunkhouse and later a stone house. Life was cheap because Company housing was inexpensive, electricity and water were free. One could even get loans to build a house in Paramaribo. The Company took care of every minute detail on the plant, even replacing burnt-out light-bulbs.

For people from the plantations, Company employment presented an escape from poverty and hard, poorly paid labor. "Did people think highly of a job at Suralco?" I asked Oma, an elderly lady married to a retired Suralco laborer, who herself had worked as a maid for Suralco staff.

Well yes, you didn't earn that much, but earlier at Mariënborg, you earned 1 guilder a week; now you are at Moengo and you earn 25, 20 guilders a week ... My husband was a carpenter at Mariënborg ... In 1949 he went to Moengo where he found work as a carpenter again. Then he received 18,50 per week ... My husband says, the Suralco is mistaken. So he put ten guilders aside. *Afraid that they would come back for it?* Yeah ... Until one day he asked a friend. Isn't the Suralco making a mistake? Because I get 18 guilders every week. Then this friend says, No, this is what you earn.

Such favorable comparisons between plantation and Suralco wages were common in oral histories of Javanese Moengonese. While Sf 18.50 seems a reasonable estimate of a starting wages for common laborers at Moengo, wages at Mariënborg must have been higher than one guilder a week. Mr. Kromo's quote of 15 cents versus 60 cents an hour seems more realistic (see also footnote 1). However, Oma's narrative serves to highlight the perceived stark contrast between the two.

The comparative value of Moengo wages remains a moot point. Oudschans Dentz mentions the relatively generous wages in Moengo's early years and Lie a Kwie and Esajas (1996:74) argue that in the 1930s, Moengo employees were the highest paid in the country. Longstanding Moengonese Mr. Ernst confirms this. "Moengo employees earned well," he says. "That's why, when the *Paramaribo* [the boat that shuttled between Moengo and Paramaribo] came from Moengo, you see all those women eyeing those Moengo-men. Yes, they come with money." Yet Staten debates and severe labor unrest in 1941-42 indicate that even in the mining sector, wages were hardly sufficient (see De Koning 2011b). Even if wartime inflation accounted for part of the hardship, several of my interlocutors pointed out that wages remained modest in the postwar years. They were hardly enough to comfortably feed a family; many Moengo women supplemented their husband's Company wages with home-based economic activities.

In 1942 mining unions were founded at Moengo and Paranam after a grim standoff between the Company and Moengo workers (see De Koning 2011b). Moengo has had a high degree of labor organization ever since, which over time yielded important gains in terms of wages and fringe benefits. In 1961 the mining sector paid the second-highest average wages in the country, Sf 3,459 per annum, as compared to, for example, Sf 1,924 in the trade sector.¹⁶ By 1973 average wages in the bauxite sector were the highest nationally, Sf 10,000, as compared to the average wage of Sf 5,730 in the transport and communication sector, the second-best paying sector (Van Schaaijk 1975:24).

Moengo offered extensive facilities and primary and later secondary schools that were said to be of high quality. Over the years, Company employment became increasingly secure and, from the 1950s onward, offered additional benefits like retirement packages, mortgage facilities, as well as scholarships for the children of employees. In addition there was a policy of preferential employment for born-and-bred Moengonese. Moengo thus provided significant avenues for intra- and intergenerational social mobility. I was told that many Moengo children had gone on to successful professional careers.

Stories like those of Mr. Spalding and Mrs. Marijke illustrate many of the links and continuities between the plantation and the mining enclave. To staff, skilled workers, and laborers alike, the switch to the mine meant sig-

16. Source: Bedrijfs- en beroepstelling (1961:4).

nificant improvements in income and facilities. However, they encountered a strikingly similar hierarchical society and were allotted largely similar positions in occupational and social hierarchies.

NEIGHBORS AND EMPLOYEES

Moengo is located in the rugged Marowijne district surrounded by small Ndyuka Maroon villages, without any towns in the vicinity. A ten-hour, twice-weekly boat service provided Moengo's major connection to Paramaribo until the East-West Corridor was completed in 1964. Even though the road lessened Moengo's isolation, its distance to the city remained considerable, in part because it could not be reached without crossing two rivers by infrequent ferries.

The Moengo enclave consisted of Moengo plant, the highly regulated and stratified company town that boasted an excellent infrastructure, and Wonoredjo. Wonoredjo's village community status meant that a village council headed by the village headman, the *lurah*, held communal title to the land, was responsible for village affairs, and had to answer to the District Commissioner (Ramsoedh 1990:112-19). While these parts were each organized in distinct, even contrasting ways, they had a complementary, even symbiotic existence. Moengo proper housed only Company employees and government personnel, while Wonoredjo also housed casual laborers, pensioners, and cleaning ladies (Hesselink 1974:65). Even though Wonoredjo had a largely Javanese population (88 percent in 1950), it also housed some Chinese and Creoles. Most non-Javanese who could not or would not live on the plant lived on the Bursideweg, at the edge of the bauxite concession, or across the river in Abraliba. Mr. Kromo, who was born and raised in Wonoredjo, reflects on the symbiotic relationship between Moengo and Wonoredjo:

Wonoredjo was Moengo's vegetable garden ... Many of those men [in Wonoredjo] were employed by the SBM, the women stayed at home. In the morning they have that *tengo*, that basket, full of vegetables, cassava and so on ... and they go to Moengo to sell door-to-door. Suralco does import vegetables twice a week, but that's not enough. That's why they buy from those Javanese women. In the morning you'd have a row of some ten to twenty women walking along the footpaths in the direction of Moengo, and by nine they'd have made all their money for that day. Then they get back to work planting and harvesting.

The Company had a fixed core of permanent workers over whom it exercised a large measure of control because they lived on Company grounds, while it could also draw on a large labor reservoir at Wonoredjo and the surrounding

Maroon villages for work of a more temporary nature. The advantage was that laborers from Wonoredjo and the villages did not require investment in infrastructure and facilities, nor did they entail economic and social responsibilities (Hesselink 1974:64-65). Wonoredjo had nothing like the infrastructure or facilities of Moengo proper, but was also largely free of the Company control ubiquitous in Moengo proper. It was presided over by the *lurah*, who acted as an intermediary between the government and the villagers and had an important say in village affairs, not least because he administered the use rights to the village grounds (see Ramsoedh 1990:112-13). Wonoredjo housed a number of small restaurants, bars, and shops, which were not allowed on the concession grounds and for many Moengonese presented a welcome escape from the more regulated Moengo plant.

The Company had a strict policy regarding Moengo's other neighbors, Maroons from nearby villages along the river and later along the road. As Mr. Ernst remembers, Maroons did not live at Moengo in the old days. "They came to sell things and wash clothes for people. But then after five they had to leave again," he says. Mr. Kromo corroborates: "At five o'clock, they had to go *down the river*."¹⁷ At least until World War II, SBM did not directly employ Maroons. This might have been deliberate Company policy to keep control of movements in and out of the enclave.

Among the first Maroons who were hired by Suralco were men from the village of Tamarin, located 30 kilometers downstream from Moengo along the Cottica River. Tamarin was the center for mission activities in the Cottica area and was seen as *pati dyali*, the priest's yard, says Mr. Witkamp, who was born there in the 1950s. In its heyday it had a sawmill, a boarding school, and of course a church, as well as a polyclinic, a store, and a service station. It attracted people of different backgrounds who were employed by the mission, recounts Mr. Witkamp: "All sorts of teachers came and stayed – Hindustanis, Javanese – and their wife and children would join them. The sawmill was run by a half-Chinese, boss Harry Chin. So you had all sorts, it was not really a Maroon village."

Mr. Witkamp says that the mission sawmill lacked a competitive edge; moreover, certain kinds of timber became scarce and difficult to log. A big fire in the Cottica area in the mid-1960s put an end to the logging industry at Tamarin. Suralco commissioned poultry farming, most likely at the local priest's behest. "If you wanted to participate in the poultry farming, you'd get all the material, instructions and sell the eggs to Suralco ... Really, for me as a young boy, I saw eggs, eggs, and more eggs." There was also a joint Suralco/government project to grow citrus fruit. But, Mr. Witkamp says, those were also destroyed in the fire. Other top-down experiments with rice cultivation and tilapia farming initiated by the ministry of agriculture also failed. "What about the chickens?" I asked. Well, the chickens were no success story either.

17. Emphasis added to indicate that this part of the sentence was originally in English.

Tamarin's days as a lively village community were over. "When the logging was no longer going well, more and more people went to Moengo to find a job ... As a young boy [i.e. in the early 1960s] I saw the shift when people left the sawmill to work for Suralco."

According to Mr. Westerman, son of one of the pioneers from Tamarin, his father and uncles were hired by the Company in the mid-1950s because they were such able soccer players. After work, soccer was the most important activity at Moengo. Teams that represented different Company departments would vie to hire talented players like Mr. Westerman's father and uncles. "People from Tamarin adapted easily to life here [at Moengo], because they had already encountered Western life. Tamarin was not a traditional village," Mr. Westerman says. He himself was born in Moengo in the late 1950s and grew up among Javanese and city Creoles. He remembers seeing the number of Maroons at Moengo increase slowly. "They were hired for the maintenance of the town, or the track. They'd get those kinds of jobs, you know, because that was really hard work, and in general they were really strong, because of their gardens."

Mr. Witkamp recounts how many ordinary laborers started out: "You don't work for Suralco straightaway; you start working for a contractor, Mr. Tuinfort, Tonki ... Then the Suralco observes you and says, 'Him I want.'" Mr. Kromo, who worked as a Company clerk, says the Company started working with casual labor through "contractor boss" Tuinfort in 1950. Tonki would not give his workers a break. "That man was a terrible fellow," he says. "When you are weeding and you stretch your back for a moment, he says, 'No, that's not the way we work, *mi mus si yu gogo*, I must see your behind.'" Mr. Witkamp has similar stories about this notorious boss: "Tonki says: 'Your soul belongs to God, but *a skin na fu mi* [your body belongs to me]' ... I have experienced the man ... If you work for Tonki you lose your pride ... You had to undergo a kind of baptism, the Tonki-baptism [laughs heartily]." Mr. Witkamp's uncle was the first from Tamarin to work at Moengo. Even though he also started with Tonki, he was able to rise through the ranks, says Mr. Witkamp: "He made it all the way to foreman with a white helmet. When you have a white helmet at the Suralco, you're almost *black staff* ... You are from Tamarin, from plantation, and you have a white helmet, and you have Maroons and Javanese and city Creoles working under your command."

GENDERED DIVISIONS OF LABOR

Life at the mining enclaves was marked by a highly gendered division of labor. With few exceptions, women at Moengo were either wives or daughters of employees. In Moengo's early days Javanese women had been involved in part of the production process, loading carts and washing the mined bauxite

(Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:132). The involvement of women in the primary production process seems to have been phased out with further mechanization. Moengo's core business soon became a male affair, notwithstanding the handful of women who did administrative work for the Company, the few female cooks and cleaning ladies in Company employment, as well as the few female teachers and nurses stationed at Moengo. In 1964 the mining sector in Marowijne employed 915 men (95 percent) versus a mere 44 women (Table 6).

Table 6. Composition of the labor force in the mining sector in the Marowijne district in 1964 by gender and ethnicity (excluding unemployed)

Race/ Ethnicity	Black/Col. Creole	Hindustani	Javanese	Chinese	[Amer]Indian	European	Other	Total
Male	436	60	343	6	34	15	21	915
Female	29	1	11	2	1	0	0	44
Total	465	61	354	8	35	15	21	959
% of total employed	48.5%	6.4%	36.9%	0.8%	3.6%	1.6%	2.2%	100%

Source: 1964 Census.

While most female Moengonese were housewives, oral evidence indicates that many supplemented their family's income with low-paid service work, especially cleaning, or home-based economic activities like the production and sale of food and sweets. Mrs. Esajas, wife of the SBM employee from Coronie who moved to Moengo in the late 1940s, contributed to the family income with her sewing. "Many women did something," she says. "Others sold things to earn something extra. Others ironed clothes." Women in Wonoredjo contributed to the family's standard of living by planting vegetables for their own use and for sale; some also worked as maids for the better-off on the plant.

Quamina indicates that at Mackenzie, Guyana's bauxite town, the Demba Company actively encouraged stable, nuclear family life and discouraged extramarital affairs (1987:28-29). Suralco seems to have followed similar policies to promote nuclear household formation with a male breadwinner, as it almost exclusively employed men and there were very few other employment options at Moengo. According to the former female director of Moengo hospital, Suralco as a rule did not employ married women until the mid-1960s, when it changed its policy and retained their services even after they were married. Moengo's women were thus almost by default housewives. Several informants claimed that the Company preferred married men and facilitated their married life in terms of housing. Company facilities like single-family housing and the

extension of numerous job-related facilities to the nuclear families of employees must have helped reproduce the nuclear family model.

In 1950 significantly more Moengonese were married and fewer were single as compared to Paramaribo (Table 8). Also the lower number of economically active women in Moengo indicates that Company policies did indeed result in nuclear household formation with a male breadwinner to a larger extent than in Paramaribo (87 percent of the women at Moengo were listed as economically inactive, versus 67 percent in Paramaribo).

Moreover, much of Moengo's public social life revolved around men. Except on special family occasions, the clubs were a male domain. Soccer, Moengo's favorite pastime which structured much of the remaining spare time and social life, was entirely male, as was for a long time the case for the somewhat secretive friendly societies, locally known as Courts, to which many employees belonged (see Hesselink 1974:84-85). Women were at home with the children, I was told, and it was a woman's task to facilitate her husband's work life. However, work routines structured the lives of women almost as significantly as those of their men. Food had to be ready in time for transport to the mine, and when father came home, the children had to be kept quiet so as not to disturb his rest. It is telling that the food delivery car was a central meeting point for Moengo's women.

DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL IN THE COMPANY TOWN

The stability and discipline of Moengo's labor force were secured not only through higher wages, relatively ample facilities, and the promotion of nuclear family formation, but also through restrictions on movement to and from Moengo. Even if the town's location played a key role in this respect, Moengo's isolation was actively policed by Company policy. Until 1945 one had to have a pass to visit Moengo; until 1964 visitors were not allowed to stay for more than two weeks and were submitted to a medical examination upon arrival (Hesselink 1974:54). "You had to come with a pass," Mr. Ernst remembers. "If I worked there, and you wanted to come, I'd have to go notify them ... You have to get checked out, even if you come on holidays. Yes, that's how strict they were." Even when such official restrictions were abolished, it was understood that one could not host guests for longer periods without the Company's approval (Hesselink 1974:54). Controls were probably not as tight in Wonoredjo, but according to an informant even there one had to notify the *lurah* of the presence of guests and the intended length of their stay.

Moengo's relative isolation and the fact that almost everyone in and around Moengo depended on the Company gave it an inordinate amount of power. If you did anything that went against Company rules, you could be summarily fired and put on the first boat to Paramaribo, as Mr. Kromo liked to

emphasize: “*down the river.*” The Company would forward your belongings. Upon further questioning, it appeared that such sanctions had been extremely rare, yet they clearly served to shore up labor discipline and compliance.

At Moengo, social position was directly linked to the position one held within the Company. Strata were designated by mode of payment – monthly, weekly, or hourly. Suralco distinguished members of the *staf*, i.e. managerial staff, from the tier of employees known as *maandgelders*, employees who were paid on a monthly basis. The latter stratum consisted of professionals, overseers and an elite of skilled workers. These were again set apart from the *weekloners* and *uurloners*, made up of skilled and unskilled laborers whose wages were calculated by week or by hour. Such stratification and the way it was institutionalized echoed the social divisions and hierarchies at the sugar plantation complex Mariënburg.

Moengo’s division of labor and the related social hierarchies long married race to class in no uncertain terms. Until after World War II, professional/staff positions were only open to whites (Hesselink 1974:52). And even after the race criterion was formally abandoned, the demand for specific metropolitan qualifications, for instance an engineering degree, ensured a large measure of continuation of this conflation of race and class. Moengo’s staff was largely foreign and white until well into the twentieth century. The executive position was invariably staffed by a Dutch person, but the Company also employed some U.S. engineers who were stationed at Moengo for a limited number of years. Some, like the well-liked Mr. Overbeck, stayed longer at their own request. In 1970, when Hesselink conducted his research, 16 of 26 staff were white (Table 7). Eight of the 16 white staff were born in the Netherlands, three in Suriname, three in Indonesia, and one in the United States and Belgium each (Hesselink 1974:67-68).

The *maandgelders* intermediate stratum was heavily dominated by Creoles, while the larger body of *weekloners* and *uurloners* consisted mainly of Creoles and Javanese, and a smaller number of Maroons. Casual labor gangs were largely made up of Maroons, who must have lived in the neighboring villages and some Javanese, most likely from Wonoredjo (Hesselink 1974:67-68) (see Table 7). As Hesselink argues, the presence of those categorized as Creoles in all strata masks significant social and racial differentiation that confirms rather than disproves the overlap of occupational/social and racial hierarchies. The term Creole covers a highly diverse group in terms of class background, descent, and “color.” Hesselink notes that in 1970 there was a clear difference between Creole *maandgelders* and *weekloners* and *uurloners* in terms of social background, which manifested itself, among other things, in the higher percentage of membership in Suriname’s more elite churches and the significantly lower incidence of common-law unions among *maandgelders* (Hesselink 1974:73).

Table 7. Ethnic composition of the Suralco labor force at Moengo in 1970 by rank

Rank	Staff		Monthly		Hourly/weekly		Total		Casual laborers	
Ethnic group										
Creole	8	31%	76	79%	328	35%	412	39%	15	7%
Javanese	—		7	7%	400	43%	407	39%	60	28%
Hindustani	—		5	5%	61	7%	66	6%	5	2%
Maroon	—		—	—	99	11%	99	9%	135	63%
Amerindian	—		1	1%	33	4%	34	3%	—	—
White	16	62%	2	2%	4	0.4%	22	2%	—	—
Chinese	2	8%	5	5%	3	0.3%	10	1%	—	—
Total	26	100%	96	100%	928	100%	1050	100%	215	100%

Source: Hesselink (1974:67).

Table 8. Marital status of inhabitants of Moengo and Paramaribo between 20 and 50 in 1950

Marital Status Place		Civil Wedding	Asian Marriage Act*	Cohabiting	Single
Moengo	Male	46	9	29	17
	Female	54	11	24	11
	Total	50	10	26	14
Paramaribo	Male	31	10	20	40
	Female	31	5	20	44
	Total	31	7	20	42

Figures based on a representative sample of 1950 census data.

* Suriname's law allows not only for civil weddings, but also for weddings concluded under the so-called Asian Marriage Act. The latter type of marriage is concluded by a Hindu or Muslim religious functionary and initially entailed conditions considered to be equivalent to ethnic or religious "common law."

These racial hierarchies are reminiscent of those at Mariënborg fifty years earlier. Shifts did occur – the disappearance of a significant European presence in the middle strata, the entry of a minority of Creoles into the staff – yet over 60 percent of the staff was still white, Creoles dominated the middle strata, while other ethnic groups made up the rank-and-file labor force. The large degree to which class and race were conflated at Moengo in part reflects differences in skills and educational level that resulted from the differential allocation of ethnic groups over Suriname's highly uneven socioeconomic terrain. Language is a good example. Sranantongo, Surinamese Creole, was the lingua franca on the work floor and in social life. Moengo's Sranantongo was specked with English expressions that pervaded work life. Higher up in

work and social ranks, one needed both Dutch and English language skills, which disqualified many first-generation Javanese and Maroon employees. While Moengo's division of labor thus reproduced much of the conflation of class and race in society at large, it also worked to strengthen the reproduction of such racial hierarchies. In his discussion of the political economy of race in the Caribbean, Girvan (1975:13) argues that racism functioned to maintain "a large and in some cases virtually unlimited supply of unskilled, cheap, and quiescent manpower for those sectors of the expanding economy which required it." In Moengo, racial hiring also helped the Company to maintain a relatively docile workforce.

Everyday life at Moengo largely followed the Company's stratification, from housing, to a range of facilities and privileges and even social interaction. As said, in Moengo's early years residential segregation was explicitly based on race. Americans, Creoles, and Javanese were housed separately. These divisions gave way to ones based on position in the Company, which, however, remained significantly inflected by race. Moengo had separate quarters where the staff was housed in luxury villas. One step down in the hierarchy, the Company provided family houses. The lowest category of workers, *weekloners* and *uurloners* lived in smaller houses, or in bunk housing.

The system of ranked housing and distinct neighborhoods was key in the institutionalization of social divisions and hierarchies of the workspace in everyday social life. This is underscored by the ample coverage it received in my oral histories. For many, the differentiated housing represented the pervasive social divisions prevalent at Moengo, as well as the alluring possibilities for social mobility, and thereby exemplifies the ambivalent experience of Moengo's social hierarchies: a sense of discrimination, but also the promise of a higher rung on the social ladder and a better life. Take Mr. Witkamp's description: "When you go from Tonki to Suralco, you end up in Schiphol [a quarter adjacent to the airstrip, named after the main airport of the Netherlands, Schiphol]. At Schiphol you had row houses divided in compartments, and you have one such compartment. And then you can move to Bernharddorp, with houses consisting of two compartments ... and then you can go to a detached house."

Mr. Westerman, introduced above as the son of one of Tamarin's pioneers, also went on to become a Suralco employee. He concisely sketches the spatialization of class-cum-race hierarchies at Moengo.

Everyone was divided. If you were staff, you lived in the staff village. As a normal, unskilled laborer you lived at Schiphol. If you lived at Moengodorp, you were a foreman. And then you had the laborers who were a bit further than the unskilled workers, they lived at Bernharddorp. And at Julianadorp you already had those men we called *gang boss*, the *heads*, they had managerial positions but were just short of being foremen.

So that's the way the village was divided. In that time, color also played a minor role. If you were light-skinned, you were already privileged ... People were so indoctrinated that they accepted it ... Hardly anyone complained ... What mattered to people was that they had a good life, that they could earn enough money to take care of a family and ... even build houses in the city. Those things mattered to them, so they did not have time to focus on the divisions. It was not until I was in the city that I realized that I had always lived in apartheid ... You can't go to Stafddorp. If you go to Moengodorp, you were looked at strangely by the children of the *maandgelders*. What is that boy from Bernhardddorp doing here?

Suralco's social hierarchies were pervasive in all aspects of life in the enclave. Even resident professionals not employed by the Company were fitted into Company divisions. Higher ranks were considered staff and granted access to staff facilities; middle ranks were included in the *maandgelders* category. These lines were exceedingly strict, and the Company initially forbade, then discouraged fraternizing across borders (Hesselink 1974:61). A person's access to different parts of town strongly reflected occupational hierarchies at Moengo. Staff could go wherever they wished; ordinary workers were not allowed on staff village grounds, which were policed by Company police. The staff village and staff club were thus off-limits to ordinary residents, except for those who had business there, particularly maids. Even the hospital had separate departments for the three strata, and staff were given priority treatment. In keeping with the persistent differentiation common to everyday life at Moengo, staff and *maandgelders* would get their groceries delivered to their door and children of staff could visit a separate staff school (Hesselink 1974:54). Social and company life blended to a large extent, which meant that the hierarchical and dependency relations of the workplace were almost equally in force outside work hours and in more private spaces (see also Hesselink 1974:113-14).

A common storyline focused on the possible dire consequences of misbehaving children. Mr. Kromo, who grew up in Wonoredjo, remembers being fascinated by the staff village grounds, which were, of course, strictly off limits. "It was clean, the grass is freshly mown. There is no fence. There are flowers and green plants; to us it's a small paradise ... The workers lived in bunks, a house with two rooms. And some people have four, eight, up to sixteen children. Don't ask me how they managed." If you ventured onto Stafddorp grounds, you'd be chased off by the guards. "Only staff children are allowed to play there. If you go again, they will fetch your father ... Those children were sent to the city or to another plantation. Because if they stayed [and repeatedly got into trouble], the father was fired."

While housing was key in the institutionalization of difference, Moengo's segregated social and leisure facilities also served as the strong mechanisms

and reminders of more generalized lines of social hierarchies and social distance in Moengo. The larger body of *uurloners* and *weekloners* could go the general recreation hall, the “Rec.” The *maandloners* had their own club, as did the staff. The higher ranks could visit the lower-ranked club houses, the other way around was impossible. As Mr. Witkamp puts it: “You can’t go to monthly club. As an *uurloner*, what are you going to do there? You go to the Rec, where they can come if they want. So they can descend, but you cannot climb.” For many, Casa Blanca, the staff club, symbolized the difference between the staff and the rest. The luxurious staff club, an imposing white plastered building standing on a spacious lawn, was the symbol of privilege.

Aunt Es, whose family was ranked as staff after her husband had been made school principal, remembers being invited for the opening of the new Beatrix Theater in the early 1950s: “We had to sit in the box. The invitation mentioned that it was hoped that in the future we’d continue to use those reserved seats.” The tenacity of rank became clear when her son, who had grown up at Moengo, finished high school in the city and came back to work in the factory for a year as a common laborer. “Well, we were seated in the box, and my son all the way up front. So we just waved to each other.”

Plantation economist George Beckford (1972) likened the plantation to a total institution, an omnipotent system in which the economic system proscribes social life, and production determines community (see Khan 2010:178-79). “The authority structure that characterizes the pattern of economic organization extends to social relationships,” Beckford (1972:54) argues. Many of these features of the plantation as a total institution that molded social life after its production system seem to apply to the Moengo of “the early days,” as many interviewees put it, illustrating the length of the shadows of the plantation at the time. Until the 1960s, Company policies and hierarchies were exceedingly rigid and significantly racially inflected, and there was no union that could counterbalance the Company’s omnipotent position combining employer, landlord, constable, and judge. Everyone who lived on the plant was dependent on the Company, and so were many in Wonoredjo. Transgression of Company rules carried the ultimate sanction of immediate dismissal and removal from Moengo. However, from the 1960s onward, many of these strict regulations would become undone and the presence of a strong labor organization helped lessen the Company’s omnipotence.

CONTESTING SOCIAL HIERARCHIES

“At Moengo we were all like family,” I was often told, yet many people discussed how those higher up in the hierarchy had abused their position or acted arrogantly. Moengo created a contradictory matrix for social life: its isolation left people no choice but to rely on each other, yet they also had to

deal with the Company's persistent social differentiation. The fact that work and social life at Moengo overlapped considerably resulted in recurring tensions about the extent to which work hierarchies should inform social life.

The Company sought to ensure that social relations would not interfere with work hierarchies. Company management set about to organize and differentiate social life to correspond with work hierarchies not only through the explicit ordering of Moengo proper, discussed above, but also through less public, but no less important instructions to higher personnel, most obviously in a prohibition to join the union (Hesselink 1974:63). In earlier days staff were forbidden to maintaining social contacts with non-staff, and while in 1970 that restriction was no longer in force, Hesselink notes that such socializing "was not looked upon kindly" (1974:61).

Suralco employees and retirees often argued that life in the Company and at Moengo had undergone significant changes since the 1960s. Their stories indicated a shift away from a highly arbitrary, race-based, and hierarchical management style that ruled both during and outside work hours, on and off the work floor. They recounted the slow but steady relaxation of the once exceedingly rigorous divisions that characterized all aspects of Moengo social life (from housing, to recreation, health care, and food provisioning) until the mid 1980s, when most formal divisions between staff and *maandloners* were revoked. Many attributed the shift away from a highly arbitrary and authoritarian management style to the slow increase in Surinamese, colored, even homegrown professional staff, as well as the influence of the union. Since the 1970s hiring and promotion practices were said to have become more meritocratic, and based on formal educational requirements and less on favoritism, color, membership in a friendly society or *Court*, and the mere ability to speak Dutch and English.

Since socioeconomic power in the U.S.-owned and Dutch-administrated enclave was so thoroughly intertwined with the racial division of labor, racial hierarchies were not easily challenged. The difficult renegotiation of hierarchies combining race and class came out most clearly in the recurrent discussions of the issue of *white* and *black staff*.¹⁸ Even when an official racial policy had been abandoned, Company management long remained almost exclusively white. However, from the 1960s onward, with increased opportunities for promotion within the Company and a growing number of Surinamese studying at technical universities in the Netherlands, the racial composition of Suralco's staff became more diverse. Yet racial differentiation persisted within professional staff ranks, primarily through the distinction between *white* and *black staff*.

18. The English terms *white staff* and *black staff* were invariably used. I have italicized these terms to indicate that these are the original terms.

That there was any differentiation between *white* and *black staff* was something that some higher up in the Company hierarchy denied. They preferred to speak of senior and junior staff. For most others the racial differentiation of the professional staff was a clear reality. To them it exemplified the persistent racism at work in Company hierarchies, which they felt was also apparent in their everyday lives. Mr. Westerman remembers the division quite clearly:

They also divided the staff village. On this side, in the direction of Casa Blanca, you had only white people. Dutch, American. On the other side, you had only dark-skinned people. *Black staff* and *white staff*, it was called. *What if you were a white or light-skinned Surinamese?* There were some people who were white, but born in Suriname, they'd be on the [white staff] side. *Really?* I'm telling you. *Based on the color of their skin?* Yes.

With increasing numbers of Surinamese professional staff, previously strict divisions became more difficult to enforce and also caused increasing resentment, as one story about Moengo in the early 1970s illustrates. According to Mr. Thompson, a born-and-bred Moengo man and former Suralco employee:

If [Surinamese staff] had family at the plant, they were not allowed to freely socialize with them. I experienced that myself, with my uncle. He was staff and socialized a lot with us. At one point he had to be transferred to Paranam. *Why?* He was not allowed to socialize with the people of the village. But my grandma was there, three of his sisters, nephews ... He had studied with a Suralco scholarship and had only recently graduated ... After a mere three months, he had to leave. He had been warned, he said ... He shouldn't fraternize that much ... He was pressured to choose [between no longer socializing with his family and being transferred], and that's how he ended up going to Paranam.

While Company management was very much alive to the possibly dangerous relationship between work and social life, it fell upon individuals to negotiate the overlap between Company hierarchies and social relations. This became particularly difficult for those who were promoted and thus had to work out how to deal with their former equals. Disgruntlement about unfair promotions could easily sour social life. Mrs. Esajas did not have an easy time when her husband made it to staff, says her son. In smalltime Moengo, "Everything concerning work is also part of community life. So if I expect to get a job and it turns out you get it ... My wife will insult your wife on the street, at the market. So my mother has had a lot of hassles, all kinds of allegations." I further heard recurrent complaints about people who, after being promoted to the rank of *maandgelder*, no longer wanted to have anything to do with

their old acquaintances. This was universally seen as a major offense. Yet, as people who had climbed up took pains to emphasize, *uurloners* and *weekloners* might also be responsible for the newly established social distance. They felt awkward visiting above their rank.

THE END OF AN ERA?

Many of the stories I heard about Moengo were nostalgic, since in 2008, when I conducted most of these interviews, the social life that was connected to mining, and the Company, had all but ceased to exist. Yet changes had already set in well before that time. Many of the workers' gains in terms of job security, wages, and social and health benefits seem to have been countermanded by a creeping disinvestment on the part of the Company. As some informants indicated, from the 1970s onward the company slowly but surely substituted its earlier role as stern paternalistic provider with that of merely an employer, getting rid of most of its extensive facilities.

By the 1980s easily accessible bauxite reserves close to Moengo were almost depleted. Moreover, military rule, which had been established in 1980, and, more generally, the decreased competitiveness of Surinamese bauxite had led to a tightening of investments from Alcoa, Suralco's mother company.¹⁹ In 1984 the company suffered losses for the first time in its history, and implemented a voluntary retrenchment plan (Lie a Kwie & Esajas 1996:200-1). The Interior War, a prolonged armed conflict between the state/regime and Maroon factions located in the rainforest that stretched from the mid-1980s till the early 1990s, led to a temporary cessation of all mining activity at Moengo in 1986 and the exodus of almost all its inhabitants. When mining resumed a few months later, operations had been restructured and were managed with a significantly smaller workforce, while many parts of the production process were outsourced to labor contractors. While in 1964 only 2 percent of those active in the mining sector worked as casual laborer, between 2002 and 2006 the number of directly employed personnel went down from an already diminished 60 percent to less than 40 percent (ABS 1964, Ferrier 2007:24). Outsourcing of large parts of the production process has effectively undercut the bargaining power of organized labor. For a majority of those employed in the bauxite industry it has eliminated many of the hard-won concessions in terms of wages and other benefits, and more importantly, job security.

19. Interview with Suralco Executive Warren Pederson (2008). Lie a Kwie & Esajas (1996:199) date Alcoa's increased reluctance to invest in its Surinamese operations to the late 1980s.

In the late twentieth century Moengo ceased to be a real mining town. Even after Interior War violence abated, many Moengonese stayed in the city or migrated to the Netherlands. In time, refugees from the interior who had fled to neighboring French Guyana took up residence in their vacant houses. Mines in the vicinity of Moengo had already been abandoned, but mining continued at more distant mines. At the time of my research, in 2008, the last bauxite was being mined and the Company was busy devising a rehabilitation plan for the area, but since then, plans seem to have changed. To ensure a steady input of bauxite for the alumina refinery plant at Paranam, the life expectancy of existing mines at Moengo has been extended until 2013, at which time a number of new mines in other areas should be operative. This should ensure alumina production through 2023.²⁰ Even with the currently uncertain prospects for the large bauxite deposits in West Suriname, bauxite mining remains a crucial part of Suriname.

SHADOWS OF THE PLANTATION?

Moengo's history provides a fascinating look at Suriname's twentieth century. It recounts the rise of a new industry that drew workers away from the plantations and urban artisanal occupations to work in a massive, highly organized and orchestrated organization-cum-social community. Founded in the late 1910s Moengo developed into a thriving enclave with at its core the highly orchestrated Moengo plant, where workers were housed in different neighborhoods according to rank. In the immediate vicinity, several more informal settlements sprang up, most importantly Wonoredjo, which became home to a large number of Javanese SBM employees. The village long served as a pool of reserve labor for the Company, while it offered many facilities and services that Moengo proper lacked.

While plantation economy analyses have pointed to the reproduction of structural features of the plantation economy on account of the economic dominance of transnational mining companies, I have asked whether everyday life in the mining enclave echoed features of the plantation. It is striking that some of the mining employees came directly from the plantations or had experienced plantation society in their childhood. This links the plantation and the mine even more directly than the macroeconomic story of the concurrent decline of the plantations and the rise of the bauxite sector would lead one to suspect. Moreover, while Moengo offered myriad opportunities for advancement, it did not mean an escape from class-cum-race hierarchies that had been characteristic of the plantation. One would be tempted to con-

20. February 2010 update on Suriname's bauxite sector, <http://www.bauxietinstituut.com/Bauxietsectoralg.aspx>; last accessed June 8, 2010.

clude that mining enclaves were pockets of a revamped colonial order, where largely white, and partially foreign staff lived in a closed-off compound, while a Creole intermediate stratum did most of the skilled labor. Groups that were more marginal in a socioeconomic and political sense – Javanese plantation workers and Maroons from the surrounding villages – filled the ranks of field laborers. Moengo's division of labor married class and race in persistent ways, even if these correlations were also in part the result of differences in skill and education. In time Company employment came to hold the promise of promotion, as the Company increasingly allowed for employees to move up through the ranks.

Like the plantation, the Company put a strong stamp on the social life on the part of the enclave it controlled. It moreover copied many of the disciplinary and discriminatory mechanisms of the plantation that similarly served to maintain a docile, disciplined workforce in the mine, the factory, and the workshop. Since there were few other employment possibilities, the Company had an inordinate amount of power over the lives of people in Moengo. Company hierarchies and regulations were pervasive in everyday life, and recurrent violation of its rules could lead to severe sanctions.

The organization of the labor process and makeup of the labor force strongly influenced the shape and fabric of family relations. The mining enclave and the plantation differed considerably in this respect. Moengo's almost entirely male labor force contrasts starkly with that of the plantations, where both men and women were engaged in the primary production process as individual workers. Suralco employment, the corresponding package of benefits and, more generally, the facilities and social life in the mining enclave were designed for nuclear families with a male breadwinner. The conditions of life at Moengo thus worked toward the creation of male-headed nuclear families.

Work-related hierarchies served to organize social life, which could result in the tense negotiation of social relations. How one dealt with the contradictory exigencies of persistent hierarchies and social life at close quarters in a small, isolated community was a central theme in many oral histories. This contradiction also marked what Moengo meant for many people: a highly hierarchical space where one might have felt tightly controlled and at times discriminated, but which also held the promise of a better life in the form of higher living standards and intra- and intergenerational social mobility.

The controlled site of the bauxite town long worked to reproduce the conflation of class and race, as well as the strict maintenance of social hierarchies and authority structures that were characteristic of the plantation. It, however, simultaneously molded all into a modern, almost exclusively male proletariat with a large measure of labor organization, and provided many with the means to make a better life for themselves and their children.

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VANESSA AGARD-JONES

INTIMACY'S POLITICS:
NEW DIRECTIONS IN CARIBBEAN SEXUALITY STUDIES

Pleasures and Perils: Girls' Sexuality in a Caribbean Consumer Culture.
DEBRA CURTIS. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009. xii + 222 pp. (Paper US\$ 23.95)

Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
AMALIA L. CABEZAS. Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 2009. xii + 218 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora. LAWRENCE LA FOUNTAIN-STOKES. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. xxvii + 242 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.50)

Over the last ten years the field of Caribbean Studies has seen a precipitous expansion of work on sexualities, as recent review essays by Jenny Sharpe and Samantha Pinto (2006) and Kamala Kempadoo (2009) have observed. The three books under review here, all based on dissertation research and all published in 2009, make important contributions to this growing literature. While each one approaches sexual politics from a distinctive disciplinary, geographic, and theoretical vantage point, all three ask readers to take seriously the central place that sexual desires and practices occupy in the lives of Caribbean people, both at home and in the diaspora. Caribbean sexuality studies are still sometimes thought of as belonging to a domain outside of, or auxiliary to "real" politics, but these studies demonstrate without hesitation how sexuality functions as an important prism through which we might understand broader debates about ethics, politics, and economics in the region. Building from the insights of feminist theorists who connect the "private" realm to community, national, and global geopolitics, they show that sex is intimately connected to certain freedoms – be they market, corporeal, or political – as well as to their consequences. Taken together, they consider

sexual subjectivity, political economy, and cultural production in unexpected ways and point to exciting new directions for the scholarship on sexuality and sexual politics in the region.

In *Pleasures and Perils: Girls' Sexuality in a Caribbean Consumer Culture*, anthropologist Debra Curtis writes about the coming-of-age process for girls on Nevis and asks how their desires are influenced by the island's rapidly globalizing political (and cultural) economy. Using a Foucauldian lens to understand the productive nature of power in relation to these girls' sexual subjectivities, she notes that her "theoretical understanding of sexuality involves exploring the complex relationship between sexual practices (what people do); the effects of sexual discourse (how people recognize a repertoire of sexual acts, as well as a set of rules and expectations surrounding those acts); and social and economic structures (what kind of world they inhabit)" (p. 8). Thus, she documents the rise of the (small) tourist industry on the island alongside a careful analysis of patterns of both individual and state-level spending and consumption, gathering data on topics as seemingly diverse as consumer loans, television-watching, and erotic ideals in order to explain the confluence of conditions critical to understanding contemporary sexual cultures on Nevis. While keen to document changes in residents' lives arising from the more recent effects of globalization (particularly since the 1980s), Curtis is also very attentive to continuities and grounds her study in a long view of Nevis's social and economic context. She explores "the way public policy regulates intimate pleasures and how consumer culture ... compete[s] with the state's efforts to regulate sexuality" (p. 1), and insists that we need to understand girls' sexual agency as "constituted along two axes: first, one that foregrounds the negative and constraining aspects of sexuality ... and second, one that recognizes the creative and positive possibilities of sexuality despite the seemingly overwhelming obstacles that Nevisian girls face" (p. 29). With this tension in mind, she asks important questions about the conflict between state public health campaigns and traditional sexual norms, about the relationship between religiosity in the public sphere and sexual permissiveness in the private, and about the normalization of sexual coercion and violence in Nevisian society.

Unlike other studies of "sexuality" writ large, Curtis also pays careful attention to same-sex intimacies, both describing and theorizing the practices of physical closeness that mark the relationships between the girls with whom she works, and for whom early fluidity about "bodily practices ... [means that] they are not [always] regarded as sexual" (p. 149). She mines the data from her focus groups and surveys to mark "the shift away from polymorphous pleasure to a more heteronormative model as the girls mature" (p. 155), and uses girls' stories to fill in the gaps in her survey material, pointing toward the intimate detail that quantitative instruments cannot capture. For Curtis, her study's aim is to "reveal both the activities of self-constitution and

experimentation in which Nevisian girls engage as well as the constraints of a larger, dynamic cultural system, [because] what the girls' lives make clear is that to emphasize one without the other misses the point entirely" (p. 175).

At the heart of Curtis's book is a rich analysis of the various discourses and sources of sexual knowledge that are operative on the island. In chapters entitled "Competing Discourses and Moralities at Play," "Consuming Global Scripts," and "The State and Sexualities," she shows how the dominant discourse is produced in various webs of opposition and conformity and highlights the contradictions that emerge as maturing girls attempt to make their way through a complicated morass of prescriptions and prohibitions. Her nuanced analysis of selected vignettes from her fieldwork "illustrates the dominant sexual patterns circulating on Nevis that compete with religious notions of morality that constitute girls' sexualities" (p. 62), shows how "as a result of high-speed global linkages – including technologies that exchange bodies and information – new sexual scripts, practices, and repertoires are proliferating on Nevis" (p. 71), and reveals the failures of state-sponsored campaigns to conclusively manage girls' sexual practices. Engaging with girls and their families across the social spectrum, as well as working professionals, returning nationals, and government officials, her study documents the various stakeholders who produce the dominant discourse on the island.

In a chapter on "globally mediated sexual scripts" (p. 71), Curtis considers the impact that pornography, romantic novels, and television networks like BET have on the kinds of subjectivities that Nevisian girls develop, particularly as access to these images has expanded over the past twenty years. Refusing to join a condemnatory chorus that sees only negative influence in the influx of U.S. American images, she argues that pornography and explicit music videos both "provide a graphic demonstration of sexual variety, and ... provide a resource for self-production" for the girls who consume them (p. 77). In a masterful analysis of a state-sponsored teen talk show produced to support the government's public health aims, she plumbs Nevisian "society's general ambivalence about sexual matters [and explores how] on the one hand, Nevisians talked openly and joked freely about sex; [while] on the other hand, there was reluctance for cross-generational talk" (p. 95). This simultaneous openness and prudery forms the backdrop for the interviews that she recounts with Nevisian girls, who reveal themselves to be alternately well-versed in and bewildered by their sexuality. Thus, she is able to "look at the ways sexuality is a domain of multiple contradictions: a locus of power and powerlessness, of self-determination and cultural control" (p. 5).

Making a deft theoretical intervention into analyses of sexual pleasure, Curtis redeploys and builds upon Louisa Schein's concept of "commodity erotics," defining it as "the collapsing of sexual desire with commodity desire or conflating sexual pleasure with pleasure received from commodities" (p. 182). Through analyses of Nevisian girls' interests in cell phones,

cars, expensive clothes, and other markers of consumption, she describes the relationship of eroticism to objects, goods, and services. She moves beyond an instrumental interpretation of the relationship between sex and money, and shows “how specific goods become infused with erotic significance, that desire for commodities can be erotic, and finally, that the erotic association between commodities and those who provide them affects sexual practices and desires” (p. 136). In this unique way she demonstrates how sexuality is embedded in economic systems (p. 9) and points her readers toward moments when Nevisian girls’ self-fashioning and identity production intersect through commodity and sexual desire. For Curtis, commodity erotics are “a dominating structure affecting the personal agency of girls” (p. 138), and she returns time and again to the question of sexual agency and its limits, describing what she sees as conditions of “diminished,” “relative,” or “eroded” agency for the girls in her study, their freedoms critically “contingent upon [the broader society’s] options and opportunities” (pp. 143–144). To understand that agency she pays close attention to girls’ practices, particularly as they trade sex for material goods, but she also attends to the ideologies that motivate their desires, and the kinds of constraints that impact the development of their sexual selves. These constraints include sexual coercion and violence, and Curtis sensitively documents how “the threat of violence, as well as its naturalization, is a consistent thread running throughout [girls’] stories” (p. 111). A chapter called “Theorizing Sexual Pleasure” also tackles the issue of sexual pain and forces readers to look, time and again, at the naturalization of coercive and non-reciprocal sexual acts in the girls’ experiences. Curtis argues that sexual violence also shapes girls’ subjectivities, leading to a “cultural expectation that [such] violence is unavoidable” (p. 114) and “to conditions in which the girls themselves are unable to recognize the extent of their social suffering” (p. 112).

Overall, *Pleasures and Perils* is an accessible yet theoretically astute introduction to theories of sexual subjectivity, discourse, and mediation. It is also a compellingly written story about an island in transition and about the girls who are coming to adulthood as these shifts take place.

In *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*, sociologist Amalia Cabezas undertakes a comparative analysis of sexual formations in two Caribbean tourist zones to demonstrate the ways that sexual and affective relationships are intimately linked to political economy. She begins with the proposition that “money runs through all affective relationships” (p. 12) and shows how ordinary people negotiate this convergence, which she maintains is at the heart of the tourism industry. Instead of focusing solely on the obvious place where these transactions take place – in sex work – Cabezas asks how we might understand the complexities of more ambiguous “relationships that combine pleasure, intimacy, and monetary support” and cautions against “privileging the sexual component as the most

important aspect of interpersonal relations” (p. 20). As such, she keeps her focus on the more generalized phenomenon of what she calls “tactical sex” (p. 4), defined as “part of a complex circulation of sex and affect to cultivate social relations with foreigners ... [that] speaks more to a flexible, contingent activity that ... uses sexuality as a stepping stone, a bridge, to permanent romantic attachments, economic support, and, at times, international migration” (p. 120). Like Curtis, Cabezas argues that “demarcations between the lives of people who sell sex, those who do not, and what exactly they are selling are not easy to categorize” (p. 83) and therefore she foregrounds questions of material interest alongside her analyses of local people’s affective investment in their relationships with tourists. Through her strong engagement with labor theory and with the scholarship on care-work, she argues that involvement in these informal affective relationships allows those locals who participate in them to resist the homogenizing and stratifying demands of the transnational, capitalist tourist industry, even if only briefly. Thus “intimacy functions as a countereconomy” (p. 17) on the islands, and becomes a means by which local people gain access to the goods, services, and opportunities that might improve the quality of their lives. Cautioning against an easy reading of all sexual-affective relationships as either crassly utilitarian or dreamy yet hopeless, she maintains that “the general tendency in the scholarship to assume that participants in these relationships misrecognize their roles or are deluded about their actions misreads intentionality and the ways in which people negotiate and express desire with economic exigencies” (p. 22).

Cabezas’s first chapters offer an historical and structural analysis of the tourism industry on both islands. She highlights the dominance of multinational firms in the Dominican Republic, and shows how their control over the island’s economy has resulted in the island’s “fragile sovereignty” (p. 39), a phenomenon that, given recent sociopolitical shifts, is increasingly true in Cuba. This is the primary justification for her comparative study and is a convincing reason to think about these two cases side by side, particularly as Cuba transitions into an economic structure that brings it closer in line with its neighbors in the Caribbean basin. On both islands, Cabezas asks whether policy (i.e. tax concessions and legislative incentives) makes this kind of corporate dominance possible, and emphasizes that the tourist industry shuts locals out of the benefits of this commerce. She draws an historical through-line between early patterns of production in the region – founded upon economic disenfranchisement in the service of foreign profit – and current models for enclave tourism. Further, Cabezas describes how government money is funneled into the promotion of these industries. Ultimately, though, she is most interested in what anthropologist Dana-Ain Davis has called “how people live policy” (Davis 2006) and throughout her study foregrounds the fact that her interlocutors rework, sidestep, and fashion livable lives in the material world that is conditioned by these policies. Thus, she highlights the way

“local populations look toward foreigners as a way to resist their exclusion” (p. 53) and demonstrates that “through traffic in emotions and sentiment, local populations can access some of the wealth that tourism can potentially impart” (p. 52). She sees the economic conditions of each island and the responses of people in and around the tourist industry as fertile ground for the emergence of new sexual subjectivities that “challeng[e] these conditions even while reinscribing old modes of oppression” (p. 84).

The strongest chapter in Cabezas’s study is her ethnography of an all-inclusive resort in Varadero, a town on Cuba’s northern coast. Her analysis reveals the complicated terrain that hotel workers tread on, caught as they are among the expectations of their foreign bosses, government suspicions about their interactions with guests, and the challenge of meeting their own survival needs. While corporate managers insist that workers sell the vacation experience to hotel visitors and encourage the exploitation of affect to craft a fantasy experience for guests, government representatives warn workers not to be overly friendly, for fear that those relationships will compromise their revolutionary principles (p. 93). Within this matrix, though, “workers ... use their graces and charm to befriend tourists for their own aims” (p. 89), beyond the profit-motive of the companies for which they work. Cabezas explores poignantly how “relationships with tourists, [her]self included, were always ambiguous, intertwining opportunity and gain with genuine affection and care” (p. 109). In the stories that her interlocutors tell about their long(er) term relationships with guests, “aspects of money and friendship were connected in complicated ways” (p. 104), so that when one worker describes a friendship with a guest from the United States, it is clear that in addition to appreciating their conversations he also hopes that commitment to their relationship will eventually provide him with a ticket to visit. As such, Cabezas “emphasize[s] the thin line between manufactured intimacy, as suggested by management, and the ways in which hospitality workers use sentiment to break down boundaries between themselves and customers” (p. 109). In the same chapter Cabezas also tackles the racial structure of these corporate ventures, and argues that “in hiring and designation of job duties European and Cuban notions of white supremacy collude to articulate the reproduction of white supremacy” (p. 101). Not only do the resorts function as “deterritorialized spaces” (p. 90), kept so by the rigorous profiling of who is and is not allowed to enter, but they also reproduce racially based divisions of labor, where black Cubans are more likely to be found participating in heritage shows or low-level service work and white Cubans are more often determined to have the “presence” necessary to advance to leadership roles in the corporate structure.

In this slender volume Cabezas sometimes struggles to meet the ambitious goals that she sets out for herself. Even so, the most convincing analyses come from her material on Cuba, which sits at the forefront of the book’s various narratives, and she makes an important case for trying to put both Cuba and the Dominican Republic in the same frame.

Cultural studies scholar Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes writes back to the traditional literature on Puerto Rican migration in *Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora*, challenging a migration studies framework that “systematically exclude(s) concerns about nontraditional or divergent gender expressions and sexualities” from its purview (p. xii). He focuses explicitly on cultural workers and artists – an archive apart from statistical, demographic, and sociological approaches, but one that allows him to engage with “intersections of migration, culture, and sexuality” (p. xiii) from a perspective that foregrounds the way sexuality shapes and conditions the experiences of Puerto Rican migrants to the United States (p. ix). Marshalling examples from fiction, poetry, and film, he also taps his readers into dance and theater productions to which we might never have had access, describing otherwise unrecorded performances and thereby creating a unique archive of this literary and cultural field. Through a careful reading of historical, anthropological, and sociological material, he offers these cultural products important groundings in their varied contexts and demonstrates the wider implications of their creation, including their resonance with broader lived experiences. His close attention to language alongside his careful discourse analyses defy studies in thrall to statistics and quantification – rather than replicating those concerns, La Fountain-Stokes focuses on the affective experiences that accompany transgressive expressions of gender and sexuality, using this work to define “queer Rican culture [as] ... a daily, lived practice as much as the production of objects for consumption or collection” (p. xxii).

Queer Ricans begins with a chapter entitled “The Persecution of Difference” and a parable that offers an explanation for why migration from Puerto Rico might not only be desirable for same-sex-desiring and gender-transgressing people, but sometimes also a matter of life and death. Elaborating on Doris Sommer’s theorization of “foundational fictions” (1993), La Fountain-Stokes analyzes a short story by Luis Rafael Sanchez entitled “¡Jum!” and its evocation of “the desire to escape from persecution juxtaposed to ultimate annihilation” (p. 18). Sanchez’s protagonist, known in the story only as *el hijo de Trinidad*, is the target of vicious gossip in the small town where he lives. He is identified only by his family name – an important referent on the island – and as he packs his bags to leave home, presumably for the U.S. mainland, his community joins together to kill him. Plumbing the meaning of silence, voice, and violence in the narrative, La Fountain-Stokes shows how “¡Jum!” captures the delicate negotiation of a community’s tolerance of transgressive practices that stand as “open secrets” and shows how quickly the “symbolic violence of words” (p. 11) can turn into the actual violence of a community incensed by the violation of its norms. La Fountain-Stokes argues that “male-to-female transvestites, masculine women, and effeminate men are ubiquitous in all Puerto Rican towns and diasporic neighborhoods, yet they are also the frequent object of

derision and even attacks. Prescriptions against male effeminacy and female masculinity do not work to simply eliminate gender-variance or trans practices and identities, but rather stigmatize that behavior and give it a specific meaning" (p. 1). In "¡Jum!" that specific meaning reflects an uneasy combination of ambivalence and repulsion that leads readers to understand why Puerto Ricans who are the target of those sentiments might feel compelled to migrate. While La Fountain-Stokes is careful to note that Sanchez's protagonist cannot stand as the representation of the experiences of all queer subjects on the island, his focus on migration leads him to center those who (try to) leave, often bearing the scars of "home." His analysis reminds us that in migration, the politics of place are equally about those who do not (or cannot) move and about how their lives are imagined from afar. This perspective highlights the "importance of location" (p. 46) and sets his diasporic analysis in critical conversation with the evolving politics of the Caribbean region.

By carefully considering both the authors' own biographies and the various cultural products themselves, La Fountain-Stokes makes a claim about the kinds of projections that authors enact in their own work. Throughout the book he considers moments of "slippage between narrator/character and author" (p. 58), and he is consistently attentive to what he calls "the intersection of autobiography and narrative" (p. 102). This is most apparent in chapters on "autobiographical writing and shifting migrant experience" and on queer women's filmmaking and writing. For example, in an analysis of Frances Negrón-Muntaner's *Brincando el charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican* (1995), a film about queer sexuality, Puerto Rican community values, and migration, La Fountain-Stokes weaves together analyses of the film's images and narrative with Negrón-Muntaner's own migration story, while at the same time he engages with her scholarly work on the intersection of cultural politics and the politics of sovereignty on the island (Negrón-Muntaner 2007). Throughout *Queer Ricans*, La Fountain-Stokes makes a powerful case for the transformative potential of these cultural productions, and ends his book with a particularly compelling chapter on the radical potential of performances by Elizabeth Marrero and Arthur Avilés, Bronx-based performance artists. In "Nuyorico and the Utopias of the Everyday," he analyzes their queer retellings, first of the classic Wizard tale in Maéva de Oz (1997) and then of Cinder- (which in their hands becomes Artur-) -ella (1996). He offers careful, exhaustive, and gripping descriptions of their stage performances, transporting readers to the open air theaters and community centers in New York where they were first launched. La Fountain-Stokes shines in this chapter, as he considers theories of queer potentiality and connects hopefulness to the imaginative practices of diasporic cultural workers. In his attention to performance and literature, he insists on the importance of stories, and shows how they can serve alternately as beacons, as "foundational fictions," and as life-affirming projects for both their producers and consumers.

Because it is pitched to readers already familiar with the island's geopolitics and with waves of Puerto Rican migration to the United States, *Queer Ricans* would fit well in a syllabus alongside a more staid sociohistorical or demographic migration narrative. It reveals the limits of those approaches while opening up the conversation to new questions about Puerto Rican identification and community in diaspora.

In his landmark 1974 volume *Caribbean Transformations*, Sidney Mintz contended that to understand the Caribbean, scholars undertaking analyses of particular places in the region have to pay close attention to U.S. influence and power bases. Each of the authors under review here seems to have taken that invocation seriously, from Curtis's analysis of the influence of U.S.-based media (like BET) in girls' lives on Nevis, to Cabezas's deconstruction of U.S.-based corporate interest in the tourist industry, to La Fountain-Stokes's work on the fraught differences between the way Puerto Rico and the United States are imagined in queer Rican cultural projects. More tricky, perhaps, are the other referents that we might consider to be important in developing studies of sexuality in the region. Along similar lines, Clifford Geertz famously called for social analysts to engage in thick description, a kind of iterative injunction to contextualize our objects of study as fully as possible (Geertz 1973, see pp. 3-30). In the Caribbean this kind of thick contextualization has presented a particular challenge, as the reality of life in the basin requires scholars to work across multiple languages (English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and a variety of Creoles), through various disciplines, to orient their studies toward various regions (the Caribbean, the Americas, Europe, and diasporas), and to engage with the scholarship from multiple academies.

All three of the authors under review faced the difficult challenge of situating their studies within these multiple literatures. Both La Fountain-Stokes and Cabezas argue for what La Fountain-Stokes calls "the particularities of the Hispanic Caribbean ... bond" (p. 61) and Cabezas draws on theories of "historical continuity" between islands colonized by Spain to justify her comparative focus on the Dominican Republic and Cuba (p. 4). Cabezas's study is steadily informed by the literature on Latin America and the Hispanophone Caribbean, but she pays little sustained attention to work on the Anglophone or Francophone parts of the region, and though she and Curtis tackle some of the same questions about the relationship between sexuality and political economy, they draw on very different archives in order to situate their inquiry. Cabezas notes that people on the ground in her field sites pushed her to think comparatively (p. 6), but even if her interlocutors failed to see the thematic connections that might have been made with non-Hispanophone islands, Cabezas's asides to Caribbean connection deserved further exploration (p. 35).

Engaging the politics of citation in a different way, Curtis explicitly refutes a call by historian Evelyn Hammonds for more black women to do work on black women's sexuality (p. 28). Curtis and I differ on our inter-

pretation (and appreciation) of this plea because of what I understand to have been Hammonds's implicit (albeit, essentialist) assumption that black women who do work on the region will honor and engage with traditions of black feminist scholarship (Hammonds 1997). While Curtis's study is challenging and beautifully crafted, she writes about sexual subjectivity in the Anglophone Caribbean without engaging with certain seminal black feminists who have done work on the region. Particularly striking is the way she elides Audre Lorde's theorization of "the uses of the erotic" (1984), which she might have brought into useful dialogue with her own concept of "commodity erotics." By contrast, La Fountain-Stokes connects the material in *Queer Ricans* in productive and challenging ways not only to U.S. and Latin American literary canons, but also to the burgeoning field of work on queer diaspora and to the women of color feminisms to which those analyses are indebted (p. 41). However, like Cabezas, his citations are largely limited to the Hispanophone canon of the region.

Even given these limits, all three books considered here work to contextualize interpersonal relationships and cultural projects within the specific histories and social dynamics of particular Caribbean places and of the communities that inhabit them. They are strongly researched studies of sexual cultures that stake a convincing claim for future work on sexuality in the region. Early in her dissertation research Curtis was challenged by a senior colleague to justify why a study like hers might be important. In partial response she replied, "Sex matters because questions of sex and sexuality lie at the core of a number of important social issues, such as the nature and role of 'family life,' HIV prevention, family planning, and teenage pregnancy. Sex and sexuality are also political concerns in the sense that bodies, lifestyles, and public health policy become the grounds on which these social issues are contested. And finally, sex and sexuality are economic concerns because they involve the allocation and distribution of state, federal, and international moneys" (p. 24). Sex matters too, as La Fountain-Stokes reminds us, because the choices we make and their repercussions are both broadly political and deeply intimate, tied in important ways to what we choose to represent of our lives and to our imaginings for the future.

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SIDNEY MINTZ AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES

Empirical Futures: Anthropologists and Historians Engage the Work of Sidney W. Mintz. GEORGE BACA, AISHA KHAN & STEPHAN PALMIÉ (eds.). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. v + 232 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations. SIDNEY W. MINTZ. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. xiv + 257 pp. (Cloth US\$ 27.95)

There can be no doubt about the importance of U.S. anthropologist Sidney Mintz in the development of Caribbean Studies. His work has influenced both the historiography and anthropology of Caribbean slavery and the emergence of Caribbean peasant societies. Now two books have been published that interrogate the significance of his work. The first is an anthology that tries to build on Mintz's ideas – as I will argue below, in a circumspect and not fully convincing way. In the second Mintz describes and compares the societies of Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico, and looks back on his work that started in the 1940s.

Mintz's career began in Puerto Rico. Under the supervision of anthropologist Julian Steward, a group of young anthropologists (including Eric Wolf, Robert Manners, Elena Padilla, and others) engaged in a research project designed to explore the contemporary culture of Puerto Rico in terms of historical changes on the island. The project reflected the increasingly active U.S. anthropology in Latin America at the time. While the projects of the Carnegie Institution in Mexico and Cornell University in Peru focused on the primitive Indian, the Puerto Rican project studied modern Latin American culture. The ethnographic gaze of the young anthropologists was not directed toward stagnant and isolated cultures but to Puerto Rico's insertion into modernity. The book that resulted, *The People of Puerto Rico* (Steward 1956), described and analyzed how different rural groups became – each in its own way – an

integrated part of the modern, globalized world and how the specific interaction between the local and the global led to differences between groups of producers and, eventually, to the creation of what was called subcultures. This perspective, which took societal change as a point of departure, would undergird the work of both Mintz and Wolf and contribute to present-day social anthropology, which takes historical change and the connection between local and global processes as its point of departure.

The Puerto Rican fieldwork also led Mintz to convert his friendship with a sugarcane worker named Taso into a book project, published in 1960 as *Worker in the Cane*, which analyzed the social history of Puerto Rico via Taso's life history. Mintz demonstrated once again that no present-day human life can be understood without taking into account global market forces but at the same time he stressed the humanist mandate of modern ethnography. *Worker in the Cane* is not the best-known or most sophisticated of his books, but it is lovingly referred to by many of his colleagues and students. The impression of direct ethnographic contact, and the detailed description of a human life that in many ways is so strange to them, explains the continuing appeal of this book for young anthropologists.

Mintz was never a theorist. He was more interested in an embedded, contextualized analysis that aimed at understanding the historical complexities of Caribbean societies. This was also the terrain where he became best known. At the beginning it was his writings on Caribbean slave society that attracted the attention of historians and anthropologists. Mintz was convinced that abolition should be understood as an internal, even local process, growing out of the slave society itself. He elaborated this analytical framework in a number of articles which he republished in *Caribbean Transformations* (1974). By focusing on the internal logic of Caribbean slave plantations, he detected a number of contradictions that undermined plantations from the inside. Slaves were allowed to keep their own provision grounds to take care of their food necessities. This created alternative and in many ways contrasting processes of change on the plantations which, in Mintz's view, created some sort of "informal" peasant societies. The slaves became what he called a reconstituted or proto-peasantry *within* the plantations. The plantations thus created in a paradoxical way their own antidote which developed into what could be called a counterplantation society. This observation helped historians understand the paradoxical logic of the development of plantation societies in the Caribbean, and their downfall, and has been fundamental for present-day understandings of slavery in the region.

It was Mintz's work on the role of sugar in the modern world-system that brought him to the attention of non-Caribbeanist academics. His *Sweetness and Power* (1985) described in detail the evolution of sugar from an expensive, small-scale spice for the European elite to an increasingly popular "drug" for the working classes. An original historical analysis of one of the

most important commodity chains in modern times, the book was erudite, well-written, and accessible to a broad public. It was also one of the first studies that acknowledged the consumer as a social agent, thereby stressing the importance of consumption for social change. It showed how “sucrose epitomized the transition from one society to another.” As Mintz writes, “The first sweetened cup of hot tea to be drunk by an English worker was a significant historical event, because it prefigured the transformation of an entire society, a total remaking of its economic and social basis” (p. 214). The book’s combination of empirical, sometimes anecdotal, evidence and grand vistas made it a best-seller.

Among the historians and anthropologists indebted to Mintz’s work some have used his views on peasant societies, slavery, and the importance of cash crops to inform and refine their own work; others have felt attracted by his combination of history and anthropology, seduced by his clear style, his sincere humanist interest in the poor, and the empirical validation of his arguments.

In this sense, it is not surprising that a number of social scientists have endeavored in *Empirical Futures*, to discuss Mintz’s work, calling him “the most distinguished living representative of a historically informed anthropology that anticipated ‘globalization studies’ by a half century” (p. 6). Nevertheless, there is a somewhat ambiguous ring to the project. It is not a dedicatory book of the sort that is published when an academic retires or passes away. Neither is it a clear response to (or a critique of) Mintz’s work. Even the book’s introduction is ambiguous and fails to make clear what the “engagement” with Mintz’s work really means. After four pages of dropping the names of authors who have been puzzled by the complexities and tensions caused by combinations of history and anthropology, Mintz is invoked to solve the riddle: “Mintz’s oeuvre represents both exemplary creativity in crossing disciplinary boundaries – long before it was fashionable to do so – and more than a half century’s steadfast commitment to empirical research” (p. 5). It remains unclear, however, exactly how Mintz’s work has informed this book. In many articles his name is only mentioned perfunctorily in an introduction or conclusion. And also in its tone and perspective, the book hardly echoes Mintz. Its dense style and complicated, post-modern jargon does not seem inspired by, or even reminiscent of, the plain language that he favored.

This is not to say that the book lacks interesting essays. Frederick Cooper’s chapter on intellectual cross-currents presents provocative ideas and connections. Rebecca Scott’s microhistory of Edouard Tinchant and his son John, who traveled through space and time between Cuba and Belgium, is well documented and entertaining. And Samuel Martínez’s article on Haitian culture in a Dominican sugar *batey* is (like his book, which I reviewed in *NWIG* 84-1&2) innovative and insightful. However, the two articles on Prohibition in the United States and the role of women in sugarcane agriculture in Papua

New Guinea (admittedly outside the scope of my expertise) are difficult to relate to the main thrusts of Mintz's work.

In 2010, Mintz reached the respectable age of 87. *Three Ancient Colonies*, which came out that year, should probably be seen as a final summary of his views on Caribbean history. It is, in his own words, "mostly a meditation, a personal look back – not weighty scholarship" (p. 24). Although showing quite different histories, the societies of Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico share a number of characteristics of which slavery and the role of (slave) plantations are the most important. This is such a crucial element because, as Mintz asserts, "the Caribbean slavery experience was unique in its implications for the nature of human social life" (p. 14). The slaves were brought to the region for economic reasons; they had to provide the labor for tropical crops that were meant for the growing European market. Sugarcane was the most important of these crops and most significant in relation to slavery, because its production is so labor-intensive. "[T]he Caribbean region has been *defined* by both the enslavement of Africans and the production of sugar and its byproducts on large plantation enterprises" (p. 29).

This assessment leads Mintz to identify another shared trait of Caribbean societies. The colonies functioned as frontiers of European expansion, in which the settlement of "empty" regions was the main underlying rationale of societal organization.

It is interesting that colonialism plays a less central role in this comparison than slavery. Mintz views Caribbean slavery as an essential feature not only for the Caribbean but for human social life in general. At the same time, in line with his earlier work, he believes that we cannot understand the significance of plantation slavery only at an institutional level, but that we have to understand its everydayness, which both concealed its horrific reality and demonstrated the agency of the slave population.

After introducing the thesis and background of the book, Mintz dedicates a chapter to each of the three societies, focusing on a specific topic: religious identity among Jamaican peasants, rural market women in Haiti, and working lives on Puerto Rican sugar plantations. Above all, these short essays allow him to look back on his life as an anthropologist and his earlier fieldwork experiences. His arguments continually shift from the very local to the general and global, from the historical to the contemporary. The life of a simple, religiously inspired Jamaican peasant becomes emblematic for a whole way of life, allowing Mintz to develop a theory of the importance of religion for Jamaican peasants. A friendship with a Haitian market woman leads to an analysis of Haitian gender relations, and by consequence, to a view of the difference between Haiti and other Caribbean societies in this realm. Making use of his early experiences in Puerto Rico, he connects the threads of his argument in his chapter on Puerto Rican society. Again he presents his old friend, Taso, and discusses the life and views of Taso's wife. On the basis of these

conversations and his long experience in the region, he confronts readers with a wide array of themes, such as Puerto Rican race relations, everyday forms of nationalism and identity, and the meaning of homicide in peasant society. Of the three essays I found this the most original and convincing.

All of his essays have a similar organization, starting out with a broadly stroked historical introduction on the background of each society. Mintz then zooms in on a number of personal cases connected to his earlier fieldwork experiences, often going back to the 1950s and even 1940s. Finally, he connects these two lines in order to understand the specific problematic coming out of the particular society and formulates some more general conclusions. Caribbeanists will probably not find many new insights in the historical introductions, although sometimes they may be surprised and inspired by the ways Mintz brings historical elements together. The personal vignettes, always illuminating, reflect Mintz's gift for analyzing his fieldwork experiences, though there is a slightly disconcerting aspect to them. Mintz's fieldwork took place more than half a century ago, but it is presented in an ethnographic present that hardly accounts for the numerous crucial changes that have taken place in Caribbean societies: the mass migration to Europe and the United States, the establishment of consumer society, the expansion of tourism, the urban violence. We can acknowledge the academic and biographical value of this book, but it is important to draw attention to these issues that are so pressing for an understanding of present-day Caribbean society.

One theme that structures this book, especially the concluding chapter, is the importance of creolization. Mintz sees the Caribbean as a region where European expansion took on a particular character. It was based on material objectives, but it quickly acquired a cultural undertone. Creolization, in his view, is the "creative cultural synthesis" which was so characteristic for the Caribbean region, especially its slave population (p. 190). "Using 'creolization' to describe supposedly global cultural processes implies that the Caribbean region, so long presumed to have nothing to teach anthropologists, is now thought to have much to teach them" (p. 43). This concept was developed in a famous essay co-authored by Mintz and Richard Price (1976/1992). It consists of two fundamental processes: giving meaning to new circumstances and the building of new or adapted social institutions. In his analysis Mintz leans heavily on work on creole languages. Where the slave population formed a majority and had a more or less stable residential pattern such as in Jamaica and Haiti, creole languages emerged. Where slavery was less dominant and manumission and mixing were more general, such as in Puerto Rico and the Spanish Caribbean in general, creoles never consolidated and the language of the colonial motherland became the mother tongue. Mintz uses this observation to draw more general conclusions concerning the differences between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic Caribbean.

For Caribbeanists none of this may sound very surprising. The differences between the various Caribbean islands have, after all, been analyzed by many Caribbeanists including Mintz before. The value of this book lies elsewhere, in the personal recollections of a prolific and influential anthropologist. Mintz's approach is original and convincing because he takes as his point of departure the lives and ideas of his "informants," the people who made his ethnographies possible. These are what in Jamaica are called the "little people." Mintz stresses time and again that these poor and often illiterate characters are the ones who should be considered crucial in his ethnographic work. "Conceding all of the risks this entails, at least the generalities with which one tries to make sense of things are constructed from what one sees of the lives, and hears from the mouths, of the people who are right there living in their own way" (p. 87). This book can be seen as Mintz's last homage to these Caribbean people who through their constant adaptation and creativity have shaped Caribbean history and society. Some people may prefer to reread Mintz's earlier work, but there is no doubt that Caribbean historians and anthropologists are greatly indebted to him for this crucial insight which entails both a humanistic and an ethnographic agenda.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work. EDWIDGE DANTICAT.
Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. 189 pp. (Cloth US\$ 19.95)

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In her response to a February 2011 exchange in *Small Axe*, Edwidge Danticat writes: “Absolute certainty is perhaps at the center of activism, but ambivalence is at the heart of art, where gray areas abound and nuance thrives.” What strikes me most in all of her writing is the grace attendant upon terror, her ability to reorient our understanding of the political. As I write, hundreds of people are being evicted from camps in Delmas, a neighborhood northeast of downtown Port-au-Prince. With machetes, knives, and batons, the police slashed, tore, and destroyed tents, the makeshift refuge of those displaced by the earthquake. Now, at the start of the hurricane season, amid heavy rains, those already dispossessed are penalized and thrust again into harm’s way.

How, then, to write about Haiti – and refrain from anger? *Create Dangerously* dares readers to know the unspeakable. But what makes it remarkable is that the dare only works because Danticat is ever tasking herself to know, confront, and ultimately – and unbelievably – create, in spite of examples of greed, fanaticism, and cruelty. Against the background of the camps, the cholera, the ongoing and unalleviated suffering of the poor, Danticat recalls other outrages: Duvalier’s very public execution of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin; the assassination of Jean Dominique, Haitian journalist and the face of Radio Haiti Inter; the torture and mutilation of Alèste Bélance after the 1991 coup that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And she doesn’t stop there. For Haiti is also America. So we know again the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina, citizens turned refugees in their own country because they are poor and outcast and black. With her characteristic calm and tentativeness, Danticat packs a wallop: “This is the America that continues to startle, the America of the needy and never-have-enoughs ... Perhaps this America does have more in common with the developing world than with the one it inhabits” (pp. 110-11).

Faced with the silences of history and a ravaged Haiti, Danticat does something miraculous. She makes hope take root in what remains, and this saving act of commemoration is what gives these chapters their coherence. In "Daughters of Memory" she introduces writers such as J.J. Dominique, the daughter of Jean Dominique, and Marie Chauvet whose *Love, Anger, Madness* – a scathing evocation of the elder Duvalier's dictatorship – "was pulled from publication for fear that her family members might be arrested or killed" (p. 68). "Forgetting," Danticat admits, "is a constant fear in any writer's life." But even though "memory" can become "an even deeper abyss," though it might seem that "our memories have temporarily abandoned us" (p. 65), she stakes out a place for remembrance. Bearing witness, then, is nothing less than a reclamation. For Danticat, writing is akin to ritual practice: the shards and the grit that counter the mythical fictions of politicians, the easy comforts of the culture-mongers.

To "create dangerously" is to remember the dead, to know that the dead do not die, and to understand that the discarded persons and things of this world – the unwanted, the ignored – must be served, must be brought back from oblivion. This is Danticat's labor. What remains most astonishing are the marked moments of intense ordinariness – the more ordinary, the more commonplace, the more exacting the consecration. It is no accident, then, that the gods of vodou (the *lwa*) take part in her stories. Out of wreckage, Danticat enhances the dead, teaching her readers how the living can speak with the departed, how the voices of the dead remain with us. She teaches us about the corpses left putrefying and dumped in mass graves without prayer, how bodies buried under the rubble of natural disaster after natural disaster crowd into the precincts of the living and give new meaning to "magic realism." As she puts it: "The real marvelous is in the extraordinary and the mundane, the beautiful and the repulsive, the spoken and the unspoken" (p. 103).

Danticat admits that she is haunted and obsessed, but never in order to make herself singular, for her goal is "to write the things that have always haunted and obsessed those who came before me" (p. 13). At the outset, then, she presents her *making art* as something like *being possessed*: she is the vessel through which the spirits of the dead – her ancestors, both real and literary – can live again. "Like ancient Egyptians, we Haitians, when a catastrophic disaster does not prevent it, recite spells to launch our dead into the next world, all while keeping them close, building elaborate mausoleums for them in our backyards." And even away from Haiti, "in the cold ... the artist immigrant, or immigrant artist, inevitably ponders the deaths that brought her here" (p. 17). Whether giving voice to her Tante Ilyana, to the painters Hector Hyppolite and Jean-Michel Basquiat in "Welcoming Ghosts," or to the numerous martyrs who died trying to stand up to despotism – whether imposed from without or homegrown – Danticat finds words to sustain the spiritual in the press of history.

In the penultimate chapter, “Acheiropoietos” (not made by human hands), Danticat invokes the icons of her ritual landscape. She returns to the execution of Numa and Drouin through the eyes of the young Daniel Morel, who witnessed their death and decided then and there to become a photo journalist. In her final conversation with him, she thinks about the risks of taking photographs: making people pose is akin to killing them. Death is also part and parcel of the writer’s destiny, since “to create dangerously is also to create fearlessly ... bravely moving forward even when it feels as though we are chasing or being chased by ghosts” (p. 148).

Danticat remembers her last visit to the Port-au-Prince national cemetery. She looks again at the cement wall where Numa and Drouin’s blood “had once been splattered.” Then she tells a story. The wall was built when a voice of longing came from “the leaves of a massive soursop tree in the middle of the cemetery.” It was Gran Brigit, the cemetery guardian, known “for her generosity in granting money to the poor.” Crowds came to hear her, “trampling the mausoleums and graves. The wall was built to keep Gran Brigit’s followers out” (p. 149). The wall that prohibits and excludes still stands; it remains even after the earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people on that afternoon in January 2010. Another icon left standing, we learn in the last chapter, “Our Guernica” is “the twenty-foot crucifix standing in the ruins of the collapsed Sacré-Coeur Church in the Turgeau neighborhood of Port-au-Prince” (p. 171). These man-made relics, in Danticat’s hands, become – like her writing – a broken but obstinate communication between the living and the dead.

Gordon K. Lewis on Race, Class and Ideology in the Caribbean. ANTHONY P. MAINGOT (ed.). Kingston: Ian Randle, 2010. xxxix + 121 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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This slim book has an interesting history, which helps to explain its strengths and weaknesses. When the distinguished scholar Gordon K. Lewis died in 1991, he left a 700-page manuscript which had been completed by 1989, a companion or sequel to his fine *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought*

(1983). That magisterial book ended at 1900; the manuscript was a survey of the Caribbean in the twentieth century. But it lacked references and bibliography, and the Johns Hopkins University Press, which had published *Main Currents* and was expected to take the sequel, declined. After much consultation among leading scholars and colleagues of Lewis, we learn from the foreword by his son David, it was decided to produce a volume that would combine some of his previously published but little-known essays, with extracts from the manuscript.

Hence the present book, edited by Lewis's former student and friend, Anthony Maingot, who also contributes a balanced and informative appreciation of Lewis's contribution to Caribbean Studies as an introduction. It must be said, however, that the book has been inadequately proofread, with especially erratic punctuation (dashes seem to have disappeared altogether), and bizarre errors in particular words, like "each" instead of "cash" or "severely" instead of "securely." Maingot has chosen not to notice, or at least not to correct, a few of Lewis's assertions that are downright wrong, such as the absurd statement on page 94 that 80 percent of all births in the Commonwealth Caribbean were (c.1989) to out-of-wedlock teenager mothers. Nor has he provided any references or bibliography (other than a three-page select listing of Lewis's own writings), a real weakness given that Lewis refers in these essays to dozens if not hundreds of scholarly and other publications, most identified simply by the author's name.

According to the back cover, the book offers "a cohesive collection of Lewis's classical pieces revisited, with previously unpublished material from the last manuscript." Sadly this is not the case. Only two previously published pieces are included (Chapters 1 and 7) and neither, in my view, can be regarded as "classical" Lewis. The first is an interesting essay on English Fabianism, impressively erudite (though absent all references) but hardly relevant to the book's theme or title, since it lacks any Caribbean dimension, and is so densely allusive to British history and thought that it's hard to see a young student of Caribbean Studies making much of it. (The book's purpose, according to the blurb, is to present Lewis's scholarship "for a new generation of Caribbean Scholars.") The second (Chapter 7) is much more relevant and accessible, being an engaging personal account of Lewis's "making as a Caribbeanist," first published in 1983. This is a splendidly combative attack on his pet peeves (American PhDs, work on narrowly defined topics, academic "fads," group research, think tanks, institutional grants for research) and a spirited (if frankly self-serving) defense of the ideal Caribbeanist, who turns out to be much like himself: "the scholar who can only work within the dictates of his or her own private intellectual passions, and who will write the great book whatever the obstacles" (pp. 112-13).

The heart of the book is the chapters from the 1989 manuscript (2 to 6). Chapter 2 is a survey of Cuba in the late 1980s. It offers a balanced and

realistic view just before the collapse of the USSR, from the viewpoint of a European social democrat rather than a Marxist. Lewis is critical of the denial of “bourgeois freedoms” in Cuba, and notes that the Cuban model “has not had any remarkable success in the region,” where the great majority cherished political pluralism and Western-style democracy. This is a sober, post-Grenada assessment.

Chapters 3 to 6 engage with “race and class” in the Caribbean through a general discussion (3) followed by three chapters dealing with “the upper crust” (4), the “middle strata” (5), and the “peasants and workers” (6). As we might expect, these essays span the entire region, revealing Lewis’s formidable learning and wide reading across both the linguistic divide (Spanish, French, English) and disciplinary barriers (history, sociology, political science, literature). There is much to learn from these pieces, even if (inevitably) they are now somewhat “dated,” and the lack of all bibliographical references reduces their value, particularly for the student. But the analysis is incisive and wide-ranging, the vision broad and essentially humanist; the grand generalizations and magisterial judgments, so characteristic of Lewis, illuminate more often than they irritate (but irritate they can: what to make of this throw-away comment on the Caribbean middle strata: “this is not altogether a completely socially useless class” [p. 84]?)

Will this book serve to present the Lewis opus to a new generation? One difficulty about all his work is that his densely allusive style, his constant throw-away references to fairly esoteric writers or thinkers, his compulsion to use obscure, often non-English words and phrases (in a single paragraph on pp. 55-56 you encounter *la civilisation presse-bouton*, *aplanamiento*, *insularismo*, *camarilla*, *ponceno*) – all these make it problematic for today’s students to cope with his writings (at least my students at the University of the West Indies, and I’d be surprised if it was very different elsewhere). Moreover, the classic Lewis works, especially *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* and *Main Currents*, are where I would want students, and general readers, to first encounter him, rather than through what is inherently a more fragmentary collection of extracts. But those of us who already know and admire his work will be grateful for this posthumous *lagniappe* (the habit must be contagious).

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Freedom and Constraint in Caribbean Migration and Diaspora. ELIZABETH THOMAS-HOPE (ed.). Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2009. xlvii + 392 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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The Caribbean has one of the highest rates of migration in the world, exporting an educated and skilled labor force primarily, but not exclusively, to the richer nations to its north. It is not surprising therefore that migration continues to engage the intellectual attention of its scholars. Migration in the Caribbean has never been a simple equation of push and pull, but the result of intricate processes of motive, culture, and response. Its impact is equally complicated. *Freedom and Constraint* is the latest contribution to the scholarship that attempts to tease out the complexity of the migration phenomenon.

This is an impressive collection of articles, bringing together twenty-three scholars, young and old, from a range of disciplines and perspectives. Elizabeth Thomas-Hope's introduction is a masterly essay laying out theoretical parameters of the field and exploring the multiple meanings of freedom and constraint within the context of migration. The first section of the book, broadly titled "Social Constructions of Race and Identity in the Experience and Culture of Migration and the Diaspora," ranges widely from a discussion of constructions of race and "otherness" by and about Caribbean migrants within the region (Rose Mary Allen, Marie-Gabrielle Hadey-Saint-Louis), in the United States (Carol Dean Archer, Mikaela Brown) where migrants emphasize their Caribbeanness rather than identify with African Americans, and in the United Kingdom (Hilary Robertson-Hickling and Frederick W. Hickling, Marcia Burrowes) where racism has produced different responses, notably, and tragically as the Hicklings point out, in mental health diagnoses. The section also includes an analysis of Andrea Levy and her literary responses to race and identity in the United Kingdom (Kim Robertson-Walcott) and issues of return (Dwayne Plaza and Frances Henry). Kathleen Valtonen contributes a theoretical chapter in this section.

The second section of the book, "Paradoxes and Possibilities of Transnationalism," has a more policy orientated focus and contains an equally diverse range of articles, from the mental health and educational impact of migration on families (Audrey Pottinger, Angela Gordon-Stair, and Sharon Williams-Brown), issues and implications of forced return (Clifford E. Griffin,

Suzette-Martin Johnson), the impact of remittances on development (Mark Figueroa, Ransford W. Palmer, Amani Ishemo), the complex question of brain drains, and potential brain gains (Pauline Knight, Easton Williams and Steven Kerr, Natasha Kay Morley, Jason Jackson) and finally a discussion of the issues of free movement of labor within CARICOM, and the “territorialization” and “re-territorialization” of nation-states as a result of neo-liberalism, globalization, and the increasingly restrictive security-based policies of the United States and Europe (Sophia-Whyte-Givans, Peter Jordens).

Necessarily with a collection as disparate as this, there are conceptual and structural weaknesses. First, while race and class are, rightly, within focus, there is no discussion on gender. Caribbean migration has, however, been distinguished historically and contemporaneously by the importance of women in the migration process, both as migrants overseas, and as caretakers at home. Yet the migrant experience for women, as emigrants and as returning nationals, and the processes for reception are very different from those of men. Race interacts with gender in particular ways. While there is discussion on the impact of remittances on development in the Caribbean, there is no discussion on why and how gender may impact on this. Again, it is often women who make the choices on the consumption or investment of remittances received; analysis of the processes and decision-making involved in this would have been a significant and welcome addition.

Second, many disciplines are reflected in this collection, but the historical dimension is lacking. There are places where an historical reflection would have provided depth. Migrants to New York in the first three decades of the twentieth century, for instance, distanced themselves strategically from African-Americans and allied themselves politically with a Caribbean, even a British, identity (until the invasion of Abyssinia). Equally, discussion on the phasing out of restrictions on the free movement of labor within CARICOM would have benefitted from some reflection on this issue: this was one of the stumbling blocks to the success of the Federation of the West Indies.

Third, the collection would have benefitted from more and better focused sections which would have highlighted specific debates, or brought together related clusters – on mental health, for instance, or remittances, or the impact of neo-liberalism, or return, to name a few. These are critical areas for migration and, in particular, for policy makers. A sharper organization would have targeted the salience of the issues more directly.

Finally, the intellectual quality and overall scholarship is uneven. Most of the chapters are well argued and make a valuable and original contribution to the debates. Some, however, are too descriptive and marred by poor editing and sloppy referencing.

Notwithstanding this, the collection is impressive in its range and ambitions. The criticality of race in the migration process has the prominence it deserves, where the similarities of experience emerge with striking force

in both inter- and extra-Caribbean migration, and in the increasing restrictions on migration that are being formulated and enacted in the northern metropolises. Similarly, the implications of migration and its residues covers crucial and timely ground for policy makers in education, development, and health, while the cross-Caribbean character of many of the issues makes a powerful case for coordinated and regional, rather than territorial, responses.

Black Europe and the African Diaspora. DARLENE CLARK HINE, TRICA DANIELLE KEATON & STEPHEN SMALL (eds.). Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. xxxviii + 326 pp. (Paper US\$ 30.00)

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While there is a long and mostly forgotten (or “erased,” depending on one’s point of view) black presence in European history, the numerical significance of a black community in the continent dates from after World War II and decolonization. Today, the population of the European Union’s twenty-five nations is over 450 million. The proportion of people of black African descent is still low, hardly more than 1 percent of the total European population. But as the great majority of these Europeans citizens or denizens of African or African diaspora origins live in the former colonial states in Northwest Europe – France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands – the proportions in these core nations are much higher and more visible, and their proponents are more outspoken.

In some twenty contributions, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* attempts to do several things at once, offering both studies on individual countries and episodes and conceptual and theoretical reflections on the meaning of “Blackness,” “Black Europe,” and “the African Diaspora.” Based on a conference held at Northwestern University in 2006, the volume offers a welcome introduction to this theme and introduces readers to debates not familiar to a wider academic audience.

There are several recurring themes. One concerns questions of definition and numbers, a second one the relationship between “Black Europe” and African Americans, and related to these two is a third issue: the struggle for empowerment. The book is organized in three sections: “Historical Dimensions of

Blackness in Europe”; “Race and Blackness in Perspective: France, Germany and Italy”; and “Theorizing, (Re)presenting, and (Re)imagining Blackness in Europe.” The merits of this ordering are evident, but as so often happens with a publication of conference papers, there is much overlap and there are some remarkable omissions. For example, there are two contributions on Josephine Baker. And, out of the ten chapters dedicated to a single country, five deal with France, only one with the Netherlands and none with the United Kingdom, while there are separate chapters on the demographically less important cases of Germany (two) and Italy (one). Fortunately, this imbalance is corrected to some extent in the contributions with a broader perspective.

First, the question of numbers and definitions. “Black Europe” is understood here as comprising both Europeans with a Caribbean background, hence “rooted” in the Atlantic slave trade, and postwar migrants arriving directly from sub-Saharan Africa. While co-editor Stephen Small defines “the connective tissue of collective belonging” as a shared interest (p. xxiii), the consensus in this volume seems to be that there is no immediate, self-evident sense of community between black Europeans of these different backgrounds. It is taken for granted that the second and later generations may also be counted as part of “black Europe.” The book offers no conclusive numerical data on the proportion of “black Europeans” within the larger population of Europe. In his fascinating historical overview, Allison Blakely arrives at an estimate of less than 2 percent; his own figures seem to amount to roughly five million, hence just over 1 percent (pp. 4-5). Later in the volume, however, estimates running as high as 18 million black Europeans are invoked (Wekker, p. 278, derived from the website of the German Black European Studies website).

Next, the relationship between “Black Europe” and African Americans. Ever since the European interbellum, African Americans from Josephine Baker to Richard Wright and James Baldwin have lived in Paris, escaping racism in the United States and finding refuge in what is often claimed to have been a “color-blind” France. Various contributions convincingly call into question this rosy picture of France, citing the contrast between high republican ideals and the practice of racism in the colonies, the long postwar, post-decolonization refusal to engage in self-critical debates about colonialism, slavery and racism, and the everyday realities of racism in contemporary France. Still, African Americans regard France, and particularly Paris, as a beacon of tolerance, but as several contributors affirm, they may be underestimating the extent to which their positive experiences can be explained by the fact that they are immediately recognized as Americans, rather than Antilleans or (especially) Africans.

Behind this looms a larger question which many contributors (e.g., Philomena Essed, Stephen Small, Gloria Wekker, and Michelle Wright) discuss openly. The volume addresses standard Black Studies themes from a

Postcolonial Studies perspective, with a focus on the interrelation of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. At the same time, several European contributors express concern, and often irritation, with the domination of African American academics in the study of the African diaspora. This domination pertains not simply (but significantly) to issues such as the funding of research, but equally to the positioning of the African American experience as the mold by which to understand African diaspora history and the contemporary black experience in Europe.

It is not surprising therefore that contributors, especially those from Europe, (politely supported in this by their African American colleagues) urge a further emancipation of their work, both in the European academy and in African Diaspora Studies writ large. Many of these contributions reflect a scholarly competence to do so. But it remains an unassailable reality that the impact of African slavery in Europe, given the number of black immigrants and later black citizens, is simply not of the same order there as it is in the United States. Moreover, the broadening of the European Union to include most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has had the effect of further reducing the proportion of blacks in Europe as well as the overall interest in the horrifying history of slavery, racism, and displacement which preceded the settling in Europe of appreciable numbers of blacks. This may and even should be distressing for those of us living in the part of Europe that was once responsible for the Atlantic slave trade, but it is a reality nonetheless which works strongly against the institutionalization of Black Studies in Europe. And so does, unfortunately, the reactionary nationalism evident in countries such as France and the Netherlands today, even if this is primarily projected upon Muslims.

In her preface to this book, Darlene Clark Hine qualifies its contents in what any European would read as a typical American style of coupling one superlative to another. To me, that type of discourse is hardly inviting, but the book itself provides many interesting contributions, both at a theoretical level and in the discussion of case studies.

Caribbean Middlebrow: Leisure Culture and the Middle Class. BELINDA EDMONDSON. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2009. xvi + 223 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

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I devoured Belinda Edmondson's edited volume, *Caribbean Romances: The Politics of Regional Representation* (1999) and often used it in my classes. Thus, I was excited to read her new book on the Afro-Caribbean middle class and its connection to the development, circulation, and consumption of popular culture. Once again, Edmondson does not disappoint. *Caribbean Middlebrow* makes a major and original contribution to a field of study that is at once established and increasingly pursued: the status, definition, and involvement of the Caribbean middle class at a variety of levels and locations.

Research on the Caribbean middle class has tended to focus on the group's social organization, political involvement, economic standing, and racial politics, particularly vis-à-vis the Caribbean working class. But in *Caribbean Middlebrow*, Edmondson has a somewhat different emphasis. Looking at newspapers, popular literary texts (including vernacular poetry), beauty pageants, and music festivals across time, she demonstrates that the middle class has produced, consumed and performed specific genres and themes within popular culture. Thus, one of her goals is to debunk the assumption that working-class Caribbean residents are the sole producers of "authentic" Caribbean culture; "authentic" Caribbean culture, she contends, resides with the region's middle class as well. Moreover, and most importantly for her, performing, writing, and consuming popular culture has been a significant way in which the Anglophone Caribbean middle class has defined and imagined itself. For Edmondson, middlebrow culture is about middle-class aspirations and, with women as its primary consumers and performers, middlebrow culture is also the domain of women.

This Edmondson shows across six chapters that make up the body of the book. In Chapters 2 and 3 she focuses on early (nineteenth-century) literary culture produced by the middle class, describing the key genres of the time and the major themes marking that work. From newspapers to magazines to novels, literature of this period revealed nationalistic themes as well as an emphasis on defining the contours of creole culture (i.e., specific sorts of social interaction across particular ethnic groups) and brownness as a

desired social identity among the middle class. Chapter 4 focuses on Louise Bennett Coverly, popularly known as “Miss Lou,” the Jamaican performer of folklore and vernacular poetry who was a major icon in the country. Edmondson shows in analytical depth that Miss Lou, known for the use of Jamaican lower-class dialect (“patois”) in her mid-twentieth-century performances, was a complex figure who, ultimately, was important to Jamaican middle-class identity. Aspiring to build nationhood, the middle class could not entirely reject a performance style deemed “indigenous” and authentically Jamaican. Chapters 5 and 6 concern the more recent popular culture forms in which the middle class actively participates: beauty pageants, music festivals, and new popular fiction. Here, with refreshing consideration of large *and* small Anglophone Caribbean countries, Edmondson highlights the global dimensions of contemporary and locally/nationally meaningful forms of Anglophone Caribbean middle-class popular culture. With respect to pageants and festivals, she demonstrates that these “native” and “authentic” cultural forms – intricately tied up with tourism – are based on imports from Europe and the United States, prompting questions about what is “authentically” Caribbean and, at the same time, allowing middle-class Caribbean residents to “reimagine themselves as global citizens” (p. 132). Regarding new popular fiction as well, she contends that Caribbean middle-class writers – through the production, circulation, and thematic content of their product – are situated *and desire to be situated* at once locally, nationally, and globally.

Two areas of focus in *Caribbean Middlebrow* are worth noting for their important contribution to the literature. First, Edmondson’s consideration of the historical development of Afro-Caribbean middle-class popular culture reveals the longevity of middle-class investment in popular culture across two centuries. Scholarly work on Caribbean popular culture has tended to look at a more recent period, yet Edmondson helps us see the trajectory of Caribbean popular culture as it relates to the middle class. Moreover, her historical analysis demonstrates shifts in the nature of middle-class engagement with popular culture across time. Such shifts extend from a thematic focus on nationalism defined through associations with the Caribbean working class to local cultural formations shaped by links to global products, practices, and values; they also extend from a format involving written texts for public consumption (novels, newsprint) to iconic performers to public events (festivals and pageants).

Second, the book is built around the novel concept of aspirational culture. As Edmondson points out, within popular culture consumed and created by the Caribbean middle class there is a thematic emphasis on a “desire for higher class status”; what people read reflects who they want to be (p. 10). In this way, middle-class readers have their class status as well as their desires for a higher status affirmed by the literature they consume. Literary culture and performance, then, become a kind of imagined community for the Caribbean middle class. This point, however, does raise a question that I

wish Edmondson had pursued, even if parenthetically: is aspirational culture purely a middle-class thing? Do not groups defined socially as other than middle-class engage in/with some form of aspirational culture, and if so, does such engagement look different from that of the middle class?

Caribbean Middlebrow is a valuable text that should be read by Caribbeanists interested in popular culture, nationalism, gender, and class. Global Studies specialists and scholars of expressive culture will also find this book useful. The text is remarkable for the breadth of its interrogation of various popular culture genres across time without sacrificing analytical depth in the process. It is also a unique and updated point of departure for exploring the position and practices of the Caribbean middle class in relation to the Caribbean working class.

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Global Change and Caribbean Vulnerability: Environment, Economy and Society at Risk. DUNCAN MCGREGOR, DAVID DODMAN & DAVID BARKER (eds.). Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2009. xx + 398 pp. (Paper US\$ 40.00)

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The two best articles in this book appear at the beginning of the volume. In "Caribbean Vulnerability: Development of an Appropriate Climatic Framework," geographer Douglas Gamble carefully surveys climatic data from the region over the past century as well as predictions for the coming century using projections from atmosphere-ocean coupled global circulation models (A-OGCMs). His tentative conclusions are that Caribbean air temperatures have increased slightly in the past century, especially in its latter half, and that climatic projections suggest further slight warming and the likelihood of moderate summer drought in the central part of the region.

Gamble laments that the “coarse resolutions” of current global circulation models make it difficult to project the climatic futures for individual islands. In “Hurricanes or Tsunami?” coastal geomorphologists Deborah-Ann Rowe, Shakira Khan, and Edward Robinson assess, graphically and pictorially, the size and spatial characteristics of boulder arrays along two segments of Jamaica’s coast. They point out that boulders as heavy as fifty and even eighty tons have been moved by massive storms in the recent past. Further, the combination of increased economic development along Jamaican beach-fronts and the possibility of increasingly severe storms of the future make their research more than academic, although with “rapid urbanization of the coastline, the critical geological evidence for making sound, scientifically-based management decisions is being bulldozed away” (p. 70)!

The volume came out of a conference of the same name held at the Mona, Jamaica, campus of the University of the West Indies in July 2006. It consists of fifteen substantive articles organized into four sections, “Caribbean Vulnerability and Global Change,” “Managing Vulnerable Environments,” “Vulnerability and Domestic Food Supply,” and “Urban Vulnerability and Urban Change.” The published articles were selected from an apparently larger number of conference presentations. Despite an article about the 2005 flooding in coastal Guyana, one dealing with crime control in the Dominican Republic, and comparative assessments involving Trinidad, Suriname, and Curaçao, there is a heavy emphasis on Jamaica. Half of the contributors are associated with UWI Jamaica academic departments, although there is representation from other Caribbean states as well as from Europe and North America. Omar Davies, Jamaica’s Minister of Finance, who has a background in geography, provides a foreword, mentioning a promising-sounding joint insurance fund recently established by several Caribbean states to aid in disaster relief.

The term “vulnerability” appears often in the articles and chapter titles, a probable result of editorial encouragement. Some of the contributors briefly discuss the term, coming up with common-sense definitions not unlike what one would find in a dictionary. In her article comparing urban livelihood patterns in Paramaribo and Port of Spain, Hebe Verrest attempts to formulate what she calls a “vulnerability index,” using the household as the unit of analysis. The variables she identifies are familiar microeconomic characteristics such as number of jobs per household. In assessing household funds as a measure of vulnerability, her decision to consider “only regularity of labour income” (p. 347) does not inspire confidence for the model’s application to Caribbean settings where so many people depend on remittances from abroad. Perhaps with a sharper focus, for example on problems dealing exclusively with either physical hazards or economic problems, definitions and discussions of “vulnerability” could have been more fruitful.

Here and there interesting discussions about local economic activities appear that are based, unsurprisingly, on field observations and interviews.

Kevon Rhiney explains the importance played by “purveyors” or middlemen who supply Jamaican tourist hotels with locally produced farm produce and the pains taken by purveyors to satisfy both buyers and sellers, an extension of small-scale Jamaican vegetable marketing that of course has deep historical roots (pp. 247-50.) David Dodman provides a brief yet fascinating description of how small-scale artisans in the Waterhouse area of Kingston smelt scrap aluminum in small ovens fueled by used engine oil and then produce pots, pans, and other containers for local market consumption (pp. 290-92.) But too many of the volume’s articles resemble yawn-producing planning prospectuses that present government data, identify a few problems or issues, and then, as a bland conclusion, suggest the need for more research.

We all agree that in an era of global warming and economic globalization, the Caribbean region is highly vulnerable, whatever the precise definition of the term. Shouldn’t researchers based in the region take advantage of their ready access to residents of the Caribbean to find out how they are contemplating and coping with these circumstances and how these coping mechanisms or survival strategies square with government plans or compare with strategies in the past? The catastrophic Haitian earthquake is of course too recent for inclusion in this volume’s case studies. But interviews with Montserratians, for example, those few still in Montserrat and those now residing in Antigua and elsewhere, might be useful starting points in throwing light on the vulnerability of Caribbean peoples, at least to geophysical catastrophe. Yet, so far as I can tell, the only Caribbean earthquake mentioned in the volume is the 1907 Kingston quake, and hurricanes are mentioned only in passing, assertions difficult to corroborate because the book has no index.

Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic. ASHLI WHITE. Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. xii + 267 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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Much has changed since the 1988 publication of Alfred Hunt’s *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean*.

The rise of Atlantic history has generated a tidal wave of historical monographs and novels on the Haitian Revolution and its global impact, including the recent award-winning books by Laurent Dubois and Madison Smartt Bell. Early Americanists continue to ride the crest of this wave, churning out scholarly books and articles on the impact of the Haitian Revolution on the United States from the Age of Revolution through the American Civil War. In this timely study, Ashli White offers a concise synthesis of much of this literature and provides a fresh and exciting analysis of Haiti's influence on the early American republic.

To demonstrate the interconnectedness of the United States and Saint-Domingue prior to the Haitian Revolution, the book begins with a comparison of the capitals of both the American republic and the French colony. There were undoubtedly marked differences between Philadelphia and Cap François. While a large free white population lived and worked on the small, independent farms surrounding the former, as many as a half a million Africans slaved in the sugar and coffee plantations beyond the latter. Nevertheless, White focuses on the similarities: a large creole (American-born) and cosmopolitan population of free and enslaved people of varying races and ethnicities, speaking various languages and dialects, vying for social, economic, and political clout in crowded urban spaces. Even the geographies of the two cities were similar. Each had geometrically aligned streets arranged in a grid pattern, with particular sites reserved for public buildings and others for public gatherings. The familiar environments facilitated a pipeline of people, products, fashion, and ideas between the two cities throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century that the revolution would increase dramatically.

Refugees from the revolution in Saint-Domingue arrived in Philadelphia and other American seaports from its earliest moments in 1791 through well into the next century. While other historians have examined the effect these immigrants had on select sites, White illuminates how, by arriving in great numbers in different times and places, they forced their new neighbors to redefine what it meant to be a citizen of the United States. The initial response was to aid the desperate migrants, but charity and philanthropy posed significant problems, as the refugees represented a diverse lot, including white slaveowners, enslaved Africans, free people of color, and – many feared – not an insignificant number of black rebels. Consequently, local reaction to the refugees varied greatly.

In a slaveholding republic that was dividing rapidly along party lines, it is unsurprising that Federalists and Republicans disagreed on the impact of the arrival of a large contingent of aristocratic slave-owners and their servants. According to White, the refugees fueled the emerging First Party System “and the refugees found themselves caught in the middle” (p. 89). In response, refugees launched a multifaceted propaganda campaign to prove their worthiness of assistance. This was easier said than done, for there was

no consensus among the citizens of the republic about whether they preferred revolutionaries or counterrevolutionaries to disembark from the vessels arriving from Saint-Domingue.

One thing most Federalists and Republicans shared was a fear of the effect the revolution might have on bondpeople in the United States. But, in a fascinating analysis, White points out how little the free white citizens of the republic internalized this fear. Placing blame for the revolution on such things as the extreme violence of the typical West Indian plantation, Americans particularized the revolution and in the process made an incredible case for American exceptionalism. White finds that Saint-Domingue “and its masters were a foil on which white Americans could convince themselves their society was immune from rebellion” (p. 133). Dangerous insouciance in the face of bloody slave revolution revealed itself in myriad ways and in particular the reaction of state and federal legislatures in response to the refugees. The few laws legislators did pass to limit the influence of Haitian immigrants and their potentially poisonous ideas from infecting the American republic routinely went unenforced. In the final analysis, Americans demonstrated a remarkable ability to ignore events that argued against their own nationalistic sense of self-worth.

The influence of much recent scholarship, which minimizes the revolutionary portents of the Haitian Revolution throughout the Atlantic world, is evident throughout this study. The historiographical drift toward an acknowledgment of the counterrevolutionary effects of the revolution provides a necessary counterweight to the longstanding narrative of the radical impact of the revolution on the slave societies of the Americas. Still, we must be careful not to underestimate the corrosive effect that Haiti’s birth had on slavery wherever it existed. Indeed, White points to some of these influences: sailors familiar with the black republic plied America’s waterways; French-speaking bondpeople who at times wore emblems of the French and Haitian Revolutions frequently appeared in the advertisements published in early American newspapers that sought the return of runaway slaves; and the massive slave revolt outside of New Orleans in the Louisiana Territory in 1811 – perhaps the largest slave insurrection in American history – may have been led by a colored *émigré* from Haiti. There were limits to the effectiveness of the Haitian Revolution in ending slavery abroad. But there is no denying that the revolution fueled the hearts and minds of enslaved people as well as their white and free black allies for generations.

Red and Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change, 1934-1957. MATTHEW J. SMITH. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. xiv + 278 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Matthew J. Smith has written an important book on the ideological developments marking Haitian history in the aftermath of the American occupation from 1915 to 1934. *Red and Black in Haiti* offers a clear and convincing analysis of post-occupation politics up to François Duvalier's ascendancy to the presidency in 1957. The occupation had profound consequences for the social structure of the country by concentrating power in the light-skinned, *milat* elite, and marginalizing an increasingly frustrated black middle class, it intensified racial tensions. *Red and Black* demonstrates how the racist and humiliating character of the U.S. occupation nurtured strong nationalist and radical sentiments among the Haitian intelligentsia.

These sentiments were also a response to the series of conservative light-skinned-dominated governments that followed the occupation. The Sténio Vincent and Elie Lescot presidencies promised reforms and accountability, but delivered little. In fact, they preserved *milat* privilege as well as a moral apartheid against the black majority. By drifting into authoritarianism in their quest to remain in power, these regimes lost popular support and both Vincent and Lescot were ultimately compelled to exit the national palace in spite of their maneuvers to prolong their respective presidencies. In the process they antagonized progressive black and *milat* intellectuals, urban workers, and the military establishment itself.

The racial exclusivity and reactionary character of light-skinned-dominated governments under Vincent and Lescot fueled popular resistance which had been nurtured by *noirisme* and Marxism. Intellectuals such as Lorimer Denis and François Duvalier, who tended to react instinctually to the exploitative realities of *milat* rule and privilege, elaborated the *Noiriste* ideology. Bent on establishing a form of black power, they appealed to the African roots of Haiti's culture and emphasized color as the unifying vehicle of a rising black "class." For *noiristes*, color was responsible for the continued subservience and exploitation of the Haitian black majority. In their eyes, the country's fundamental problem was *milat* rule; the solution was encapsulated in their slogan, "*les noirs au pouvoir*" (p. 101). In fact, the prominent

noiriste, Daniel Fignolé, argued that in Haiti, color and class were the same and thus that class conflicts in the island were nothing but conflicts between the oppressing *milat* minority and the oppressed black majority (p. 65).

In contradistinction, Marxists like Jacques Roumain, Étienne Charlier, and Jacques Stephen Alexis stood in stark opposition to what they defined as the *noiristes*' simplistic dichotomy of color. They downplayed the significance of race and espoused the slogan of the Parti Communiste Haitien: "Color is nothing, Class is everything." In their perspective, Haiti's predicament had little to do with the color of its rulers; instead, it was rooted in the country's exploitative capitalist structures and in the bourgeoisie's utter subservience to imperialism (p. 20). Thus, neither color nor nationalism would change Haiti's class-ridden and exploitative social order; what was required was the introduction of socialism. Not surprisingly, Marxists viewed *noirisme* as an ideological cloak manipulated by the black political elite to mobilize the masses and conquer power (p. 87).

Smith argues against both the *noiristes*' erasure of class and the Marxist's overpowering denial of race. As he explains, "the color question has always been central to political relations in Haiti. Yet color conflicts were but one of a multiplicity of concerns that guided radicals and informed political protest. Issues of class, a struggle for democracy, anti-imperialism, and competition for state control were quite often equally pronounced" (p. 193). While eschewing color as the fundamental analytical variable in understanding Haiti, Smith acknowledges that it had wider popular appeal than class. In fact, it was *noirisme* with the emergence of Fignolé as the charismatic leader of Port-au-Prince that triumphed in the aftermath of the political collapse of Lescot's *milat* regime. Mobilizing immense crowds dubbed *woulo konmprese* (steamroller), Fignolé threatened the conservative order and facilitated the coming to power of Dumarsais Estimé in 1946 (p. 86).

The Estimé regime appointed *noiristes* to "all major areas of governance and state affairs" (p. 108). They included members of the black intelligentsia and middle-class professionals such as Roger Dorsinville, François Duvalier, and Émile St. Lot who saw themselves as the vanguard of the black revolution. They sought to abolish *milat* power and claimed to be the *authentiques*, the real inheritors of the values of Haiti's war of independence. Their political vision, however, was hardly democratic. Not only were *milats* the exploitative enemy that had to be destroyed, but the black masses themselves were to be denied political autonomy; they had to follow blindly the dictates of a charismatic man of destiny. Thus, *noiristes* came to espouse a form of political messianism grounded in the belief that black power entailed "a black leader and group leading the masses like a shepherd" (p. 109).

The authoritarian tendencies of the *noiristes authentiques* generated fears of a descent into dictatorship not only among Marxists who accused them of being fascists, but also among more liberal and conservative groups. Estimé's

unconstitutional maneuvers to remain in power and his increasingly repressive smashing of the opposition, particularly the radical left and the trade unions, created the conditions for the ascendancy of the armed forces. Upon Estimé's forced resignation in 1950, a Junta took over the reins of power and organized presidential elections that Paul Magloire, the undisputed leader of the military, won easily.

Magloire's conservative and dictatorial rule satisfied the *milat* bourgeoisie but engendered growing opposition from alienated *noiristes authentiques*, populist forces, and the left. Eventually, like his predecessors, Magloire was forced out of office leaving the country ripe for François Duvalier's extreme *noiriste* takeover in 1957. Smith argues convincingly, however, that Duvalier's takeover was not inevitable; left wing as well as moderate *milat* forces had an opportunity to prevent it. They failed because of their own internecine ideological fights and the ferocity of personal animosities among their major leaders. In addition, the fear of communism in the cold war era meant that the United States used its immense power to prevent any radical alternative to Duvalier.

Duvalier's bloody dictatorship crushed the popular movement that had both opposed conservative and *milat* privilege and contributed to his own rise to power. And yet, the spirit that had nurtured this opposition movement persisted and re-emerged in new forms to fuel the fight against the Duvalier dynasty itself. Matthew Smith's book offers a sophisticated and meticulously researched study of the political sources and impact of this enduring spirit. From now on, it will be impossible to understand modern Haiti without reading *Red and Black*.

Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos. LOUIS A. PÉREZ JR. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. xiv + 333 pp. (Cloth US\$ 34.95)

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Cuba in the American Imagination provides an innovative and compelling account of American visions of Cuba. Digging deep into two centuries of American consciousness, Louis Pérez Jr. mines a rich seam of documentation,

from diplomatic correspondence to newspapers, popular poetry, and theater. In so doing, he uncovers a hoard of historical gems: the metaphors that underpinned American thinking about Cuba. The story is brought to life by elegant prose and masterful analysis, and vividly illustrated throughout with numerous political cartoons taken from over a century of American newspapers.

The book argues that Cuba “inscribed itself deeply into the very certainties by which Americans arrived at a sense of themselves ... as a nation” (p. 2). The United States’ eventual intervention in Cuba in 1898 ushered in a new age of American imperialism, establishing in the process an array of metaphors which would shape how Americans thought about themselves and the rest of the world throughout the twentieth century. Thus while the book’s focal point is the Spanish-Cuban-American war, the narrative moves both backward to examine the thinking that made American intervention conceivable, and forward to analyze how this intervention was then incorporated into the nation’s historical identity.

Pérez begins by reminding us that metaphors underpin human thought. Thought, in turn, is intimately related to action. Metaphor is there for a purpose, subtly shaping “the way that systems of domination normalize the internal moral logic of power” (p. 15). Yet the subtlety of metaphors meant that using them was not necessarily a knowing, consciously deceptive act with malign intent, but helped underpin ordinary people’s “spontaneous” and often well-intentioned thought and language. However, this “spontaneity itself must be understood to possess a history” (p. 4). In a sense, the book provides such a history of spontaneity, tracing the carving-out of the channels through which a nation’s thoughts would flow. By recognizing both the power and purpose of metaphors, and the fact that they can be used unconsciously, Pérez distinguishes between the deliberate exercise of power by the nation’s rulers and the often genuine moral convictions of ordinary Americans who engaged with the idea of Cuba.

The remainder of the book traces dominant metaphors that have shaped U.S. attitudes toward Cuba. Throughout the nineteenth century the island was imagined as a ripe fruit waiting to fall into American hands, or as a neighbor, implying moral obligations of reciprocity. Depictions of Spanish ill-treatment of women during the 1895-98 war then fed metaphors of Cuba as a damsel in distress, justifying American “manly” intervention. With the end of the war and U.S. occupation of the island, earlier popular portrayals of Cuban “neighbors” as heroic but downtrodden independence fighters quickly shifted, with Cubans becoming instead “a racialized rabble” (p. 100). Cuba became a naughty child, needing tutelage before it could claim sovereignty. Innumerable cartoons depicted Uncle Sam bringing up his new “family” of wayward black and brown children – Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Hawaii. Images of a child being taught to ride his own bicycle proved an especially compelling means of conceiving occupation as benign tutelage.

Meanwhile, the 1898 war became part of national memory, with American soldiers' sacrifices remembered via public monuments and celebrations of "Maine Day" in both the United States and Cuba. Remembrance fostered U.S. expectations of gratitude – a notion inseparable from the exercise of power. In turn, Cuban revisions of the American historiography of 1898 underpinned the ideology that brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959. History, Pérez reminds us, was fundamental to the Cuban patriotic project – something that the Americans, caught in the cognitive webs of their own metaphors, were unable to grasp. Hence, the principal American response to Castro was one of bafflement: Cuba became, literally, incomprehensible. Confusion turned to outrage as "the Americans reacted to developments in Cuba in profoundly emotional ways" (p. 255), revealing how deeply imaginings of Cuba were embedded in American national identity. Shock and confusion gave shape to new metaphors of Cuba as a weapon pointed at the United States, or as cancerous or contagious, and to deep nostalgia for what the Americans had imagined as their Caribbean "playground."

Thus, the book gets inside the process of how these two nations came to talk *across*, rather than *to*, one another. "Americans rarely engaged the Cuban reality on its own terms ... or Cubans as a people possessed of an interior history or as a nation possessed of an inner-directed destiny. It has always been thus between the United States and Cuba" (p. 23). Pérez's writing resonates with a deep understanding of the people of both countries, and sympathy for them, carefully distinguishing their metaphorical imaginings from the political purposes of U.S. leaders. The book ends by considering the disturbing connections between metaphors past and present. The "neighbor" metaphor used for Cuba would expand over time, until the U.S. envisioned itself as the "neighbor" of the whole world; the bicycle image was re-used in 2004 to portray American policy in Iraq. In a final twist, Cuba itself became a metaphor: intervention in Grenada in 1983 was depicted as helping avoid "a second Cuba at our door step" (p. 267). Thus the book needs to be read not only by scholars of U.S.-Cuban relations, but by anyone interested in the self-constructions of the United States, or the actions in the world to which those constructions have led. Just as metaphors became part of a nation's cognitive process, so *Cuba in the American Imagination* will profoundly shape the thinking of those who engage with its rich insights.

Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848. MANUEL BARCIA. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008. xvi+ 211 pp. (Cloth US\$ 29.95)

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Over the last twenty years a noticeable shift has been afoot in the temporal and thematic focus in Cuban historiography of the nineteenth century, and race relations and slavery in particular. Beginning in the 1990s and continuing until today, scholars have produced dozens of excellent studies as part of an ongoing commemoration of Cuba's 100-year anniversary of its struggle for independence. Taken together, these studies have changed our interpretation of the independence struggle by highlighting the central role played by slaves turned rebels and their claims to write themselves politically, culturally, and legally into the new nation state. Likewise, a similar historiographical transformation has more recently got underway with a marked attention to pre-1868 Cuban history. Scholars are moving away from economic interpretations of Cuban slavery with a focus on sugar and dependency in exchange for exploring the complexity and internal dynamics of what became Spain's ever-faithful island and most important colony in the nineteenth century. Manuel Barcia's highly readable and historiographically insightful *Seeds of Insurrection* brings new evidence to one of the most important topics in Cuban slave studies: resistance.

Drawing on sources mainly from the Archivo Nacional de Cuba (Havana), but also regional archives in Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, and Santiago, Barcia's study has two broad goals. The first is to analyze slave resistance beyond looking at rebellions and maroons alone; the second, and most important for charting new insights into slave historiography, is to examine the African origins of slaves as central to understanding their strategies of resistance. In taking on these two challenges, Barcia works primarily with criminal and judicial records that captured the transcribed (and often translated) thoughts, voices, and actions of Africans that got deposited as testimony in legal records. He recognizes the inherent challenges in working with such power-laden sources and is less concerned with what they reveal specifically from a factual and empirical perspective than with the stories, strategies, and patterns of resistance they document.

Barcia opens his book with a concise chapter entitled “The African Background of Cuban Slaves” to catalog the major African ethnic and cultural groups among the enslaved population, such as Congos, Gangas, Lucimis, and Carabalis. Subsequent chapters build on this discussion to show how certain political, social, and cultural practices such as military training, witchcraft, and even ridicule can be traced to an identifiable set of transferred African cultural grammars that developed in Cuba. In most cases of violent resistance, Barcia tends to argue for transplanted African cultural traits rather than practices that had to be “creolized” and modified to their Cuban surroundings. What is noteworthy in the findings is that he links the study of Cuban slavery ever more clearly to African history, rather than seeing resistance as simply opposition to racial enslavement. While discussing rebellions (Chapter 2) and marronage (Chapter 3), Barcia also criticizes Cuban historiography for paying what he regards as far too much attention to “heroic” resistance as a prism through which the 1959 Cuban Revolution has long been refracted.

After leveling his well-deserved criticism, Barcia turns to his antidote: day-to-day resistance. Building upon the 1980s methodological work of anthropologist James Scott and slave scholarship elsewhere in the Americas over the last thirty years, he documents how foot dragging, feigning illness, flight, dancing, suicide, and “even attending mass were acts of resistance” (p. 115). Continuing his thematic emphasis on day-to-day resistance and his methodological approach of focusing on Africans instead of slaves, he examines how Cuban-born Creoles and African-born *bozales* used the colonial legal framework as a strategy to escape enslavement. On the legal culture of slavery, he soundly reasons that because Creoles were more familiar with Spanish judicial institutions and slave laws, tended to be concentrated in urban centers, and had financial resources and associational ties to notaries, the African-born population was at a clear disadvantage in exercising legal rights.

Barcia’s emphasis on violent vs. nonviolent and African vs. Creole forms of resistance, which provides the interpretative scaffolding that cogently holds his study together, will certainly be familiar to scholars of Caribbean slavery. His study should be commended for placing Cuba within long-established and ongoing historiographical debates that make the contours of his argument informative for scholars who do not specialize in Cuban slavery. At times, however, he tends to cleave the divisions between Africans and Creoles and their respective strategies of resistance with greater precision than what the quantitative and qualitative evidence cuts. Barcia concludes that “manumission and coartación [slaves purchasing their own freedom] were viable legal channels for Creole and urban slaves, but for most African-born slaves – particularly those who worked long hours on remote sugar plantations – they were almost nonexistent possibilities. African-born slaves had no one to negotiate with and did not know what to negotiate in any case” (p. 132). The most exhaustive quantitative study done to date on *coartación*,

by the team of Laird Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, found that the urban African-born population not only participated frequently in the process, but actually outnumbered Creoles during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ Similarly, while Creoles tended to be better equipped to navigate colonial Cuba's legal structure, Barcia does mention that the African-born population often brought cases and provided frequent testimony in judicial records. Courts routinely employed translators of various African languages and even "Less frequently, in dealing with non-Christian slaves, prosecutors compelled the slaves to swear by their own gods or to offer their African birth names" (p. 11). These points in no way call into question the major findings of the study, but only serve to qualify some of the overarching conclusions in favor of a more subtle division between African and Creole strategies of resistance.

Manuel Barcia's *Seeds of Insurrection* is a pioneering study in arguing for day-to-day resistance as the central feature of the Cuban slave experience. His attention to African cultural practices and experiences of the enslaved makes this a valuable contribution to the rapidly burgeoning literature of the African Diaspora. Scholars of Latin American and Caribbean slavery will need to make room on their bookshelves for this important volume and its findings will make for fruitful discussion in graduate seminars.

1. See Bergad, Iglesias Garcia & del Carmen Barcia 1995:122-42, esp. p. 132, figure 6.9.

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BERGAD, LAIRD W., FE IGLESIAS GARCIA & MARÍA DEL CARMEN BARCIA, 1995. *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878-1930. MARIOLA ESPINOSA. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. x + 189 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.50)

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The book's title, "Epidemic Invasions," is enticing and the subtitle, "Yellow fever and the limits of Cuban independence, 1878-1930," promises an even more interesting brainteaser. Mariola Espinosa, an assistant professor of the History of Medicine at Yale University, describes the ordeal of a country fighting a war to become independent from Spain and eventually falling under the dominion of the United States, all intertwined with the efforts to eradicate a disease: yellow fever.

The book's seven chapters are complemented with abundant notes, a bibliography, and an index. In the first chapters, Espinosa describes the effect of yellow fever on susceptible populations and the efforts to clean the "filth" in Cuba to prevent epidemic invasions of the disease to the United States as a justification of that nation's military invasion of Cuba. Chapter 4 presents the controversy about the attribution of the discovery of the mosquito vector between U.S. military physician Walter Reed and Cuban doctor Carlos J. Finlay. As described in the remaining chapters, U.S. health authorities, after accepting that sanitation efforts were not controlling yellow fever, directed sanitary interventions to eradicate the mosquito. In the course of the book, U.S. occupation's strategies, the importance of the Teller Resolution and the Platt Amendment in the negotiation of Cuba's independence, and the political manipulations and power struggles between these two nations are extensively documented.

Espinosa's conclusion is stated in the last chapter: "This book has argued that a principal reason for the 1898 U.S. intervention in the war between Cuba and Spain was to alleviate conditions that threatened the U.S. South: the increase of yellow fever and the neglect of sanitary measures in Havana brought about by the war were intolerable" (p. 118). Also implicit early in the text is the following: "In the meantime, the United States had little choice but to protect itself from Cuba" (p. 16). Such statements imposed a cautious stance on this reviewer. In many ways the book is an important description of the "standard view" that the origin of U.S. yellow fever outbreaks was Cuba. ("The 1897 yellow fever epidemic, like many other outbreaks before it, was of Cuban origin" [p. 11].)

Espinosa's arguments to show that the United States intended to invade Cuba in order to control yellow fever represent an unbalanced view of the possible motivations for the invasion. She fails to present evidence of the concern of the United States regarding the elimination of yellow fever in its own territory. The excessive emphasis on references about "the prevalent view in the United States that Cubans were a dirty people" (p. 102) presents a biased view of the situation in Cuba as well as in the U.S. South. In a single chapter there are at least seven direct quotations about Cubans as "inherently dirty and disease ridden" (p. 109) and not a single mention of sanitary conditions in the U.S. South, thus ignoring other plausible explanations for the yellow fever epidemics. Sanitary reasons are unlikely to be the only or the most important forceful motivations to lead a country to war, but they provide an altruistic rationale that can exclude the discussion of mercenary or military objectives.

My own expectation that the book would provide an analysis of the impact of a disease on the efforts of Cubans to gain their independence, as the subtitle announced, was only partially fulfilled. Espinosa documents, abundantly, how argumentation about yellow fever and public health conditions provided a publicly debated reason for repeated interventions by the United States in the development of the Cuban republic, and therefore shows the importance of epidemic disease in altering (even unexpectedly) political and military affairs. Espinosa nevertheless fails to expose the contradictions and relative weight (compared to other reasons) of the much-proclaimed "genuine humanitarian desire" to control yellow fever in Cuba as well as to protect the health population of the U.S. South.

Yellow fever still affects about 200,000 persons annually (leading to 30,000 deaths), mostly in Africa and South America (Mutebi & Barrett 2002:10). Globalization and transportation allow pathogens and vectors to reach susceptible populations farther and faster and pose yellow fever as a recurrent threat throughout the tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Therefore, public health officials will benefit from historic investigations of outbreaks to learn about important risk factors and alternative explanations of why and how different groups in the population get the disease while others are spared. Readers interested in public health, politics, and urban development will find *Epidemic Invasions* thought-provoking, but it may also leave them with the desire to read alternative and more comprehensive histories of U.S. interventions in Cuba, and yellow fever in both Cuba and the U.S. South.

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The Cuban Connection: Drug Trafficking, Smuggling, and Gambling in Cuba from the 1920s to the Revolution. EDUARDO SÁENZ ROVNER. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. xiv + 247 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00)

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This book highlights some of the common denominators in studies of illicit trading, whether the substances involved are drugs, weapons, alcohol, or something else, and whether focused on their historical antecedents or contemporary dynamics. All underscore three attributes – complexity, multidimensionality, and transnationality – showing that they exist whether the unit of analysis is a single country, a region, or an even wider geographic ambit.

The three are evident in Sáenz Rovner's book, which deals with illegal smuggling of marijuana, opium, cocaine, alcohol, and people, as well as with casino gambling and related illegalities. Rich in detail, with copious footnoting, *The Cuban Connection* weaves in the interconnections with local politics, international relations, health policy, and economic calculations and miscalculations. The book consists of an introduction, twelve chapters, an epilogue, and a rich bibliography. Although ostensibly a work of history, it would also be valuable for fields such as political science and sociology and interdisciplinary areas such as Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and criminal justice.

The Cuban Connection suggests, quite rightly, that understanding Cuba-United States dealings on illegal practices requires looking beyond those two nations to others in the Americas, including Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala, and it necessitates probing connections and influences in places far beyond the Americas, among them Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The book also provides valuable insights into elements of globalized crime in the early-to-mid-twentieth century, and it offers interesting vignettes about the criminal world of people such as "Lucky" Luciano and efforts by the United States to deal with that enterprise.

As Cuba and the United States are two of the main state actors in the study, the power asymmetries are evident in both bilateral and multilateral dealings. Not surprisingly, double standards are also part of the picture. For instance, during the 1925 anti-trafficking treaty negotiations, the United States sought rights to inspect and confiscate goods on Cuban ships but was not disposed to reciprocity. This is reminiscent of the "ship rider" treaty negotiations involving the United States, Jamaica, and Barbados during the 1990s.

Sáenz Rovner shows the demand-supply nexus involving the United States and Cuba and the often perverse political and social underpinnings of the relationships in the period under study, just as in the contemporary context. The smuggling of alcohol and people, for example, was driven by political and social circumstances within the United States – including Prohibition – and by the close bonds that had been developing between the economies of the two nations, partly as a result of Platt Amendment hegemony. “Conversely, drug trafficking in Cuba flourished not only because of these external factors but also because of conditions that were internal to the island, including Cuba’s plunge into political anarchy, leading to a state of impunity that fostered a broad range of criminal conduct” (p. 29).

This study also shows some of the perversions of domestic politics within Cuba and the United States where smuggling and gambling and responses to them often were just factors of political expediency as politicians tried to gain or retain power, subordinating matters of health or morality to political dictates. On the last point, Sáenz Rovner ably demonstrates how corruption facilitated varying illicit practices and has been injurious to the social order in both Cuba and the United States. In several places in the book it is obvious that racial prejudice in the United States both clouded and guided dealings with Cuba and other subordinate states.

Yet racial prejudice also was part of the domestic Cuban landscape. It influenced the way political elites there – and not just during one administration – defined who in Cuba were vulnerable to and involved with drugs and other “social depravities” and how they should be treated. Moreover, Sáenz Rovner reveals that Cuba was not just a victim of illegality involving marijuana, opium, cocaine, and the other substances and of the casino operations with their signature gambling and prostitution. Indeed, Cuban individuals and corporations and the Cuban state were, at various times, active perpetrators and financial and political beneficiaries of the nefarious acts.

In terms of writing style, the study could have profited from transition paragraphs between chapters that explicitly connected them. More significantly, several crucial matters are given overly short shrift. Discussion of the involvement of the Pío Socarrás government in drug trafficking is less than four-and-a-half pages. The involvement of Batista and his *compadres* is dealt with in just ten pages, and the dynamics of drugs, alcohol, and gambling in the early stages of the Cuban Revolution in a mere eleven. These last two would have been places for Sáenz Rovner to extend to Cuba his considerable expertise on the contemporary history of illicit trafficking elsewhere in the Americas, notably in Colombia.

Overall, *The Cuban Connection* (originally published in Spanish in 2005) is a worthy read not just for the fascinating historical contours it provides, but also because it highlights the complexity, multidimensionality, and transnationality of illegal trafficking, irrespective of the substances involved and whether the practices are occurring in the Americas or elsewhere.

Before Fidel: The Cuba I Remember. FRANCISCO JOSÉ MORENO. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007. xiv + 198 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

The Boys from Dolores: Fidel Castro's Schoolmates from Revolution to Exile. PATRICK SYMMES. New York: Pantheon, 2007. 352 pp. (Cloth US\$ 26.95)

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For fifty years now, ever since one of the first books to be published on Fidel Castro Ruz, by Jules Dubois, *Fidel Castro: Rebel, Liberator or Dictator?* (1959), the question has constantly been the same as that posed by Dubois in his bold and enigmatic 400-page compendium of interviews, written in a marathon of twenty days. The conundrum of separating out the two sides of the equation is to be found repeated in Francisco José Moreno *Before Fidel* and Patrick Symmes *The Boys from Dolores*, the two volumes that are the subject of this review.

They form part of a range of texts, many with false premonitions of a death foretold and a gamut of diverse speculations that proliferated after 31 July 31, 2006, when the Commander in Chief, at the time convalescing from surgery, ceded power to his brother Raúl (b. 1931), the comrade in struggle only five years younger than Fidel (b. 1926).

It was the first time the Great Leader had absented himself physically, and there was an air of uncertainty as to whether or not it would be forever. Then, in February 2008, after nineteen months without having appeared in public, Fidel declared that he would stand down from the leadership of his country. Almost half a century had passed since he took power, and this was seemingly to signal the end of an era.

That is the context for these two truly singular books, whose underlying thread is recollections by individuals born in Cuba.

In *Before Fidel*, Cuban-American political commentator and adviser Francisco José Moreno regales us with a dramatized fresco of elite reminiscences from before the revolution that began in 1959 with the overthrow of Dictator Fulgencio Batista and his flight from Cuba.

In *The Boys from Dolores*, North American travel writer Patrick Symmes delves into the tired memory of Cubans in exile and on the island, and presents the odyssey that is the fruit of his research.

Although at times baroque in the detail of his literary discourse (whether in the description of the adornment of a table for special occasions, such as

Epiphany, which is the Christmas festivity in Cuba, naming and enumerating the various dishes, or the names of the streets of his childhood, adolescence, and youth, in the company of his family or on his own), Francisco José Moreno regales the reader with his memorabilia of a Cuba that for many in exile, like him, only exist in the imagery of a certain social class and ethnic origin to which the protagonist in question and those like him belong. Call it pining, nostalgia, or blues. It's all the same.

Christmas began on the evening of December 24, Nochebuena, and ended with the wonderment of January 6. On Nochebuena there would be an all-family dinner in the formal dining room, and the women would cook and adorn the house and decorate the table, extended to accommodate everybody coming for dinner, never less than twenty-five or thirty, and the children would play and fight, and the men would smoke cigars and sit around waiting for my father to eventually call everyone to the table. The menu always included a salad with green and red tomatoes and lettuce and watercress and radishes, and dish would follow dish until the star of the evening, the roasted pig, made its triumphal entrance to everyone's delight, and the importance of the occasion was marked by the presence of wine, the only day of the year my father allowed alcohol to be served at home. (p. 27)

Throughout one of the most convulsed and corrupt periods of the young nation (1930-1950), this one-time university classmate of Fidel Castro Ruz conjures up for us an eloquent and entertaining verbal daguerreotype of well-selected images of some of the finest moments of his life that took place in circumstances and settings of which he, Francisco José Moreno, obliges us to take heed, in the knowledge that things will never again be as they once were.

For his part, Patrick Symmes sets out to impress with a risky operation on a surviving anatomy by means of controversial surgeons, in this case student companions of Fidel Castro Ruz at his two former exclusive schools: Dolores in Santiago de Cuba and Belén in Havana, both the divine work of Jesuits.

The virtue of this book is that it offers the novelty of a testimonial relic, which only these interlocutors could have revealed. No one else. Through a detective-type narrative of intrigue based on primary sources, Symmes seeks and finds fabulous characters at times reticent to recall memories of those young years of a privileged life alongside a young, undoubtedly gifted rebel on his way to becoming what he became.

Symmes, it appears, felt that there was a missing link in the extensive bibliography on the man Fidel Castro Ruz and concluded it was the young Fidel through his cohorts of the time, of whom few retain a sense of balance. One of the most celebrated, the historian, journalist, and professor Luis Aguilar León, passed away in Miami in early January 2008 at the age of 82. "Lundy,"

as he was known, wrote for *El Nuevo Herald* and worked for Radio Martí, both visceral in their *anti-castrismo*.

Segura had been at Dolores from 1936 to 1946. He'd spent five years in Fidel's company, but they hadn't been close. Even then, he had had an accountant's temperament. Small, slight, modest, he didn't mix well with the overweening force of Fidel's personality. He remembered sitting near Raúl in classes. "The only thing I can tell you," Segura said, "is the story of how he jumped from the third floor with an umbrella" (pp. 126-27). It began when Fidel had idly suggested that an umbrella could serve as an emergency parachute. Other boys jeered at the notion. Fidel had insisted. Soon there was a dare, and by the end of the school day everyone knew that Fidel was going to jump off the third-floor gallery with only an umbrella. He had to prove he was right. With everyone watching, he climbed over the third-floor railing and jumped. What happened?

"Nothing," Segura said. "He landed fine." He lowered his voice another notch, to a whisper. "What a shame he didn't crack his head" (p. 127).

The end-product is a passionate and valuable collection of testimonies to fuel the many other polemics engendered since adolescence by this legendary revolutionary statesman who holds the world record in having been the target of 637 assassination attempts over a forty-year period, and of course having survived them all to accuse the government of the United States of America of planning, instigating, or allowing those attempts.

Not without justifiable reason, Symmes persisted in his endeavor in almost clandestine fashion and succeeded in drawing out the more hermetic of those who formed part of this kind of Fidelian brotherhood: those who had known, or said they had known, at one point in his long life, to a lesser or greater degree, a figure who has commanded fascination on the world stage, survived nine hostile U.S. administrations, and still in mid-2010 persists in writing and publishing his reflections on the contemporary world about him, challenging his very own immortality. Undoubtedly, he is himself a human relic.

Of splendid interest, this book by Symmes carries us to new crossroads, in contrast with that by Francisco José Moreno which constantly announces from earlier pages the descriptions in paragraphs to come. But time and space should be made to indulge in the various voices in each that make for an enjoyable incursion into a small part of the pre-1959 Cuban republic.

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Lam. Essays by JACQUES LEENHARDT, and a biography by JEAN-LOUIS PAUDRAT. Paris: HC Éditions, 2009. 320 pp. (Cloth €50.00)

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This massive volume is really at least three in one. Apparently launched as an idea by publishers Hervé and Anne Chopin, and enthusiastically endorsed by Wifredo Lam's son Eskil, it is structured around hundreds of full-color reproductions of Lam's art, interlarded with six substantive essays by philosopher/sociologist Jacques Leenhardt, and concluding with a useful decade-by-decade biography by Africanist art historian Jean-Louis Paudrat. There are also several dozen photos of Lam (mostly posing in one or another of his many studios). For anyone whose vision of Lam's art is based on such canonical paintings as *La Jungle*, this book opens up the multiplicity of artistic conceptions that marked different moments in his productive life, from the 1920s to his death in 1982.

Leenhardt's art critical essays follow Lam's itinerant life, beginning with his departure from Cuba to Spain as a promising young art student, painting strikingly realistic portraits and landscapes, but soon reaching out in new directions. Influences on his art – and his conception of what art should be doing – run from Bosch and Dürer to Breughel and Goya. But he's also beginning his relationship with Surrealism and automatism, producing some Matisse-like paintings, and participating actively (together with Nicolás Guillén and Alejo Carpentier) in the Spanish Civil War. In 1938 he moves to Paris where, thanks in part to Picasso (who called Lam his "Cuban cousin"), he develops important relationships with a wide range of artists, poets, art dealers, and others. In 1941, he flees Europe on a steamship together with Claude Lévi-Strauss and André Breton, landing in Martinique where he begins a lifelong friendship with Aimé Césaire, before returning to his native Havana. The book takes us through Lam's travels (Cuba, Paris, Milan, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, New York, Paris...), ending with a decade spent largely in Albissola, Italy, where he turned from drawing and painting to three-dimensional work in bronze and terra-cotta.

Leenhardt bravely explores a number of delicate and complex issues, from Lam's feelings about Africa and his relationship to Afro-Caribbean possession cults to critical interpretations of his work that go against statements by Lam himself. For example, "Certain critics claim that Lam's paintings were meant to accompany rituals of possession, as part of Afro-Caribbean cults. But such a hypothesis is in direct conflict with the fact that Lam approached these

cults with an extreme distanciation” (p. 178). Or again, asked by Gerardo Mosquera about Fernando Ortiz’s interpretation of the “sumptuous buttocks” in *La Jungle* as a reference to Afro-Cuban métissage, Lam replied, “The big buttocks: I put them at that place as a volume that corresponds to the diagonal on which the weight of the composition reposes at that point. Obviously, this is completely tied in to the formal aspect of European art. I produced my painting according to the criteria of sixteenth-century art, and especially French painters such as Cézanne and Matisse” (p. 210). Citing further comments by Lam on the relationship between the universe of symbols and the construction of a painting – “the political sense, the African poetry, and the European construction of space” – Leenhardt concludes that an overly strict symbolic analysis carries real dangers. Lam, he points out, was bemused by Ortiz’s view of the buttocks, “so pleasing to European critics!” (p. 210). Here, I find echoes of the struggle that Romare Bearden experienced when facile symbolic interpretations of his art pegged it as socially conscious statements about race and evocations of “awe, magic, ritual, and ceremony” and the valiant attempts that he and his close friends made to show that, for example, his use of African art was more based on aesthetic considerations than on political, identitarian, or ritual concerns (Price & Price 2006).

With his creativity fueled by an unusually cosmopolitan range of artistic and intellectual friends and environments, Lam has inspired analysis and homage from a whole series of interesting authors, including his last wife, the Swedish artist Lou-Laurin Lam. *NWIG* readers hesitant to take on a serious study in French might want to combine perusal of the striking images in the book under review with the texts in one of the many books about Lam in other languages. I would recommend two early studies – the English edition of Michel Leiris’s *Wifredo Lam* (1972) and the Spanish edition of a book by Lam’s friend Max-Pol Fouchet (1976) – as well as Lowery Stokes Sims’s excellent study of Lam and the international avant-garde (2002).

This new book on Lam is visually stunning and intellectually alive. At the same time it’s a frustrating book to read. The artworks are presented in very approximate chronological order so that looking for the image of a painting from a particular year involves flipping through five or ten pages. But there’s no indication in the text whether the image of a work under discussion is reproduced in the book. For example, learning that Lam played subversively with the image of the *Mona Lisa* in a 1950 work entitled *Lisamona* (p. 216), readers will scan in vain the pages with art from the late 1940s and early 1950s. An index of works at the end of the volume is awkward to use, especially since pages cited in italics (indicating images) and in roman (citing discussion) are barely distinguishable. A simple indication of the page on which a particular image appears would have been helpful for readers trying to relate the textual commentary to the art under discussion. Aside from what appears to be a dropped line of text on p. 54, the book seems carefully proofread.

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Healing Dramas: Divination and Magic in Modern Puerto Rico. RAQUEL ROMBERG. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009. xiv + 295 pp. (Cloth US\$ 60.00)

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In this extremely well-written ethnography, Raquel Romberg explores the significance and meaning of divination and magic in modern Puerto Rico. In engaging prose, complemented by copious photos, she sheds light on a variety of healers and healing modalities with rich descriptions of rituals, amulets, *trabajos* (magic works), altars, sacred landscapes, and more. Readers are fortunate to have Romberg, a native Spanish speaker, as guide to these worlds of *brujería* (witch healing). Given the rapid speech of Puerto Ricans and the esoteric nature of much of the discourse, anything less would have resulted in a much weaker book. A resident of Argentina who moved to the United States, Romberg teaches anthropology at Temple University in Philadelphia. In *Healing Dramas*, she revisits tapes made during her extensive fieldwork eight years prior to her current work. The lengthy yeasting process has produced a feast of a book. Deeply immersed in both fieldwork and academic theory, this is a read to savor.

Eighty-five percent of the island's population identify as Roman Catholic, and it is imperative that any book on the topic of Puerto Rican healing explore religious and spiritual intersections between this faith tradition and Taíno as well as African influences (see Rich forthcoming). This task is one Romberg

handles masterfully, additionally drawing connections to Puerto Rican communities on the mainland United States and to the processes of globalization and modernization more generally.

Romberg is well versed in anthropological theory, citing both relevant classics and contemporary gems, and usually this work illuminates rather than obfuscates her subject matter, something which may not be said of all contemporary anthropology. For instance, in a section devoted to the body, she makes excellent use of Csordas's work on Christian charismatics (1990). Later, toward the end of the book, she helpfully draws on Turner's classic work in *The Forest of Symbols* (1967) when describing her initiation into reiki in El Yunque, a healing modality closely associated with Mikao Usui, a Japanese professor trained at the University of Chicago. Beyond anthropological theory, Romberg draws comparisons between the spiritual consultations she describes and Greek psychodrama and poetry. As she notes, like the language of the healings, poetry works in part by violating the standard norms of discourse. Likewise, she argues, the catharsis of theater has much in common with spiritual healing. As another example of the breadth of her scholarship, in her discussion of dreams, she cites work from sources ranging from Maimonides to Tedlock to modern psychology.

Romberg's enthusiasm for her subject is contagious. Her narrative talents shine whether describing a healer such as Tonio, who was born with a *zurrón* (caul), a symbol of good luck and special *facultades* (powers), or relating the story of a married couple unable to conceive for two or three years who happily give birth to a baby after a ritual at El Yunque cleanses them from a bewitchment. The engaging style makes it likely that this book will find its way into anthropology of religion seminars, where students will discover that in addition to its stated subject, the book offers ample food for thought on a variety of methodological and theoretical issues, such as entering and leaving the field, and documenting one's work while respecting those with whom one works.

Occasionally some may wonder if Romberg has "gone native." "Does she really believe this stuff?" readers may ask. In the end, it does appear that she has adequately situated herself relative to her text in such a way as to clarify the way her belief system relates to her scholarship and how these beliefs have shaped her experiences and fieldwork. At many points, her descriptions seem to leave aside the issue of the validity or veracity of the consultations. For instance, describing a ritual which included a foot massage filled with honey and molasses, she appears to maintain a detached style of description, noting the words and actions of the parties involved, but not for example, commenting on the ethical implications of advice given by the healers. Yet elsewhere she describes how, since her fieldwork experiences, she has been unable to tear poor-quality photos of people she loves before disposing of them, not wanting to "trigger, even unwittingly, any tragic sequence of

events that might hurt, via the laws of invisible magic correspondences” (p. 197) someone she loves. Romberg continues to write that while she “rationally knows that it cannot happen, [she] still cannot do it.” In addition to making for a more interesting read, Romberg’s refreshing candor and frank honesty enhance the credibility of her work. Rather than being relegated to a diary kept under lock and key in some basement file cabinet, or whispers in the hallways of professional conferences, her reflections on her own beliefs courageously welcome us into both her world and to the world of divination and magic in modern Puerto Rico. By so doing, she vastly enhances our understanding of the subject.

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Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City. LORRIN THOMAS. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. x + 354 pp. (Cloth US\$ 40.00)

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Legally, Puerto Ricans have never had their own citizenship, as a recognized set of rights and obligations bolstered by a sovereign state, apart from Spain and the United States. Between 1898, when U.S. troops invaded the Island, and 1917, when Congress granted them U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans were ambiguously regarded as U.S. “nationals.” Today, residents of Puerto Rico still cannot vote for the president or vice-president of the United States, elect their own congressional representatives, or be fully protected by the

American Constitution. Paradoxically, when they move to one of the fifty states of the American union, Puerto Ricans acquire all the privileges and duties of U.S. citizens.

In her admirable work, Lorrin Thomas appraises the consequences of this legal dilemma for Puerto Ricans in New York City. She dwells on the enduring legacy of colonial citizenship and racial discrimination for Puerto Rican migrants, especially their political disempowerment and social exclusion. According to Thomas, Puerto Ricans were among the first minority groups in the United States to struggle for their human rights and demand a reversal of collective violations of justice. By the late 1960s, the so-called Nuyorican movement resonated strongly with “the politics of recognition,” as conceptualized by Franz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jürgen Habermas, among others.

To document her thesis, Thomas amassed an impressive array of primary and secondary sources of information. She canvassed the archival collections of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College, notably the Jesús Colón and Erasmo Vando papers, as well as the Vito Marcantonio papers at the New York Public Library and the Leonard Covello papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. She culled numerous newspaper articles, oral history interviews, reports, and memoirs to trace the political trajectory of Puerto Rican New Yorkers. She also sampled Spanish-surnamed persons in the 1925 manuscript census of New York State and identification card applications to the Migration Division of Puerto Rico’s Department of Labor. In addition, she incorporated an extensive scholarly literature in Puerto Rican and Latino studies, allowing her to compare her original findings with those of prior researchers and develop a relevant theoretical framework.

Thomas’s narrative highlights several historical moments and left-wing political ideologies, largely coinciding with each decade from the 1920s to the 1970s. In the 1920s, Puerto Ricans began to arrive en masse in New York City, particularly in East Harlem, which became known simply as El Barrio. Thomas points out that most migrants were then primarily concerned with ending the colonial status of their homeland and establishing political alliances with other groups in the metropole. As U.S. citizens, most Puerto Ricans swiftly joined New York’s Democratic Party machine, even though many identified with Puerto Rico’s nationalist movement, led by Pedro Albizu Campos.

During the 1930s, Puerto Ricans faced mounting racial barriers in New York City, as the fastest-growing population of racially mixed “foreigners.” Given the prevailing racial binary between whites and blacks in the United States, the classification of Puerto Ricans as “Negroes” hindered their incorporation into American society. Remarkably, none of the applicants in Thomas’s sample of identification cards during this period was labeled “white” (p. 72). As she observes, “being categorized as ‘black’ in the United States was tantamount to losing the most important benefits that U.S. citizenship was sup-

posed to offer" (p. 75). Unfortunately, Puerto Ricans in New York City became socially invisible vis-à-vis African Americans. Thomas skillfully illustrates this point in her analysis of the Harlem Riot of 1935, sparked by the alleged death of a "Negro boy," Lino Rivera, who happened to be "Porto Rican."

Furthermore, Thomas shows that Puerto Ricans made more group demands as U.S. citizens on the fledgling welfare state during the New Deal era. In El Barrio, most migrants supported the leftist Congressman Vito Marcantonio, who in turn advocated Puerto Rico's independence. Many Puerto Rican New Yorkers adopted a nationalist discourse that linked the dismantling of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico with the alleviation of the immigrants' poverty in the United States. The politics of "here" and "there" were progressively intertwined.

After World War II, the worldwide decolonization movement revived the issue of the Island's colonial status. As the number of Puerto Rican migrants swelled during the late 1940s and 1950s, they were publicly represented as dangerous, problematic, and undesirable strangers who could not "assimilate" into mainstream American culture. As Thomas writes, the Puerto Rican left formulated a counterdiscourse to propose that the United States had dislocated the Island's economy since 1898 and created the dire material conditions that led to mass emigration after 1945 (pp. 146-52). This critical perspective on colonialism, which undermined the Island's much-touted industrialization program, "Operation Bootstrap," became an integral part of grassroots migrant organizations, particularly during the 1960s.

Puerto Rican activists increasingly challenged the liberal discourse of individual rights, making stronger claims about sovereignty and self-determination, both on the Island and in the United States. By the 1970s, a new generation of stateside Puerto Rican leaders embraced a more radical agenda, animated by the civil rights, Black Power, student, and anti-Vietnam War movements, as well as the Cuban Revolution. The best known left-wing militants were members of the Young Lords Organization, founded in Chicago in 1969 and extended to New York City shortly thereafter. In Thomas's sympathetic assessment, the Lords "articulated a connection between abstract problems like colonialism and racism on the one hand and, on the other, the particular manifestations of those problems in people's lives" (p. 238).

Thomas concludes that "the Puerto Rican case, and other similar ones, demonstrate that fully 'equal citizenship' remains largely unattainable for groups that are ethnically or racially marked within the majority society" (p. 250). She underlines that "the struggle for recognition is indeed the common thread that links the diverse claims of the many Puerto Ricans in this story" (p. 253). To return to my point of departure, the project of a "Puerto Rican citizenship," whether in the United States or in Puerto Rico itself, remains elusive. In both places, Puerto Ricans are still considered "foreign to the

United States in a domestic sense,” as the U.S. Supreme Court declared in 1901. Thomas’s commendable research painstakingly teases out the political implications of that oxymoronic legal doctrine, as Puerto Ricans found that they could not enjoy the same civic, political, and social rights as earlier European immigrants in the United States.

Livestock, Sugar and Slavery: Contested Terrain in Colonial Jamaica.
VERENE A. SHEPHERD. Kingston: Ian Randle. xl + 279 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.95)

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Although sugar has dominated Caribbean historiography, Verene A. Shepherd has been at the forefront of a group of scholars exploring economic diversity in the region. With *Livestock, Sugar and Slavery*, she draws on her dissertation research to re-examine Jamaican history through the theme of “contested terrain.” Her focus is on the battle that pen keepers waged for land and for political and social power during the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century reign of sugar in Jamaica. At the same time, she casts the dominance of sugar in Jamaica in a new light by taking her analysis into both the pre-sugar and post-emancipation era. Shepherd shows that pens (livestock farms) dominated the island in the pre-sugar era, that they continued to compete with sugar planters at the height of sugar, and that the amount of land being used for livestock farming grew again after abolition with the collapse of sugar. In fact, to accentuate the idea of a dynamic agricultural landscape in Jamaica, she concludes by exploring the late nineteenth-century rise of the banana barons. Her deep appreciation of the historical landscape of Jamaica is among her greatest strengths as a scholar; the book reflects a remarkable amount of archival research, particularly in Jamaican archives and in the United Kingdom.

Throughout, Shepherd achieves a careful balance between economic, social, and cultural history. She offers new evidence on the domestic economies born of the interplay between sugar plantations and livestock pens. She also deftly analyzes the social hierarchy or “ranking” system in Jamaica and its privileging not only of whiteness but also of the sugar barons (especially the metropolitan born) and the connections to export production. She challenges

the idea that pen keepers were part of an alternative “Creole Society” with its own cultural goals. Instead, she argues, the pen keepers shared the values of the sugar barons, especially their desire to become wealthy enough to leave Jamaica. In the process she offers a more nuanced explanation of why sugar came to dominate in Jamaica that moves beyond strict environmental and economic determinism, embracing contingency and cultural factors. Occasionally, her interest in reconstructing the entire world of pen keepers leads her far afield from her theme of contested terrain. She includes, for example, an extensive section and two tables on Thomas Thistlewood’s sexual interactions with slaves while at Vineyard Pen in 1750-51 and at Breadnut Island Pen in 1768, but adds nothing substantial to the exploration of Thistlewood’s relations with his slaves already provided by Trevor Burnard (2003).

The title *Livestock, Sugar and Slavery* and the theme of contested terrain suggest a comparative analysis of pens and sugar plantations and a focus on the interplay between them. Although this goal is often achieved, livestock pens and pen keepers form the core of the analysis, which is not always comparative. In this sense, Shepherd explores only one side of a battle between multiple actors for economic, social, and political power. Ultimately, her promising theme of contested terrain is never fully realized. To show the ways in which Jamaican agriculture remained diversified and the land was contested, she could have included much more on coffee planters and more from the perspective of the sugar planters.

Shepherd offers several excellent maps that help ground her analysis in the terrain but she overindulges both in tables and in her many anecdotes. The short book includes 39 tables and 15 figures. The tables are an impressive demonstration of the research that went into this work but they often include gratuitous data that do not advance the argument. The tables are not always reader friendly and most of the raw data would have been better translated into bar graphs, line graphs, percentages, or other more accessible formats. Likewise, there is an unnecessarily frequent reliance on long block quotes from sources that could have been paraphrased or analyzed more fully. While Shepherd depends to a large degree on the eighteenth-century Jamaican planter and historian Edward Long, she also seeks to distance herself from him, noting (correctly) that his work is “extremely racist” (p. 2). She never explains exactly how this influences her judgment of him as a source. Her digressive reference to Long’s racism reflects a problem in presentation: it is not always clear who she intends her readership to be. Most experts would be familiar with Long’s virulent racism. The extensive tables, maps, and scatter diagrams and her deep archival research indicate that she aims at an almost exclusively specialist audience. Yet, her topic sentences are often more suited to a general readership. She tells readers at the outset, for example, that “The slave system established by the English was racist and sexist” (p. xxiv).

With this book, Shepherd has further buttressed her position as one of the world's foremost experts on the history of Jamaica. She offers the most complete examination of pen keepers available in the literature and this book, particularly its analysis of ranking, skilfully recreates the internal dynamics of a mature plantation society. Never overly speculative, Shepherd grounds her claims firmly in her sources. Her theme of contested terrain is promising even if she fails to include all of the agricultural players in this contested landscape. The book is an impressive contribution to the burgeoning literature on the diversity of the Caribbean and to our understanding of the internal economy and society of eighteenth-century Jamaica.

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Daddy Sharpe: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Samuel Sharpe, a West Indian Slave Written by Himself, 1832. FRED W. KENNEDY. Kingston: Ian Randle, 2008. xii + 411 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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The Jamaican slave rebellion of 1831 was a critical event in Jamaican and Caribbean history. It broke out just after Christmas and was one of the largest rebellions in the Caribbean. It destroyed many of the most prosperous sugar plantations in the western part of the island and may have involved upwards of 20,000 slaves. As with other slave rebellions in the Caribbean and across the Americas, the repression was savage: hundreds of enslaved men and women were killed in its wake. Moreover, the rebellion helped to persuade the British government to abolish slavery three years later.

One of the intriguing elements in the rebellion was its leader, Sam Sharpe. A charismatic and highly intelligent slave, Sharpe became a Baptist as well as a Native Baptist. His involvement in the rebellion – as well as the alleged

complicity of Baptist missionaries – led it to be called “The Baptist War.” Sharpe believed in passive resistance: he envisioned the enslaved refusing to work after the Christmas break in 1831 and forcing slave owners to pay wages to their laborers. He was famously quoted as having said on the gallows that he would rather die than continue to live as a slave. *Daddy Sharpe* provides a fictional account of his life, based on contemporary sources as well as historical accounts of the period. As Fred Kennedy suggests, the book is “creative in the sense that I have fictionalized characters and situations, but non-fictional in that I have re-told historical facts, wherever possible, from a chronological viewpoint” (p. viii).

The novel portrays Sharpe’s early days on a small farm in western Jamaica. His mother, a strong-willed African-born woman, was forced to sleep with the white overseer on the property. According to Kennedy, Sharpe himself became a favored house slave who was eventually hired out to work at a lodging house in Montego Bay before becoming a slave driver on a sugar plantation. He experienced a religious epiphany, joining the Baptists and becoming a preacher. Convinced that slavery was unjust, Sharpe also maintained that the authorities in Jamaica were withholding freedom from the enslaved. *Daddy Sharpe* describes the outbreak of the rebellion and the subsequent destruction of both property and slaves. It is interspersed with notes from the jail where Sharpe was awaiting first trial and then execution.

Kennedy has a good sense of the sounds and smells of early nineteenth-century Jamaica. For example, he does well in describing the Christmas festivities of the enslaved and slave life on a plantation. The novel also deals successfully with the outbreak of the rebellion and makes extensive use of contemporary sources in tracking both its course and its suppression. In addition, *Daddy Sharpe* has a good grasp of the complexity of Jamaican society at the time of the rebellion, especially in terms of the interaction between planters, missionaries, free coloreds, and the enslaved.

At the same time, there are problems with some of the characterization in the novel and with its treatment of history. The text is meant to be written by Sam Sharpe and also by others involved with him, including Mrs. Sharpe, the wife of his owner. However, in Kennedy’s version of her diary, Mrs. Sharpe writes with a twenty-first century outlook on disease, noting, for example, that an epidemic of malignant fever “mainly punishes those whose immune systems are unaccustomed to the climate” (p. 109). In a different vein, Sharpe’s description of his feelings about a visit from his mother before his execution seems implausible: “A mother’s love is very special. It fills the void that is now mine and helps me to confront the inevitable” (p. 363).

There are also jarring moments in Kennedy’s treatment of history. For example, Sharpe’s mother prophesizes her son’s future greatness and says: “you will fight fi freedom one day like Cudjoe, de brave man who led de slaves in battle” (p. 11). This is presumably a reference to the leader of the

Maroons whose vision of freedom was very different from what Kennedy is suggesting. *Daddy Sharpe* also proposes that the Maroons took bribes from slaves who were looking for a place to hide. Yet this overlooks the fact that the Maroons themselves returned runaway slaves after 1739 rather than providing a haven for them. Finally, the novel describes John Manderson as “one of the select brown-skin men who helped our cause for freedom” (p. 143). Although some brown politicians did support abolition, Manderson was not one of them.

Overall, then, this novel provides considerable insights into Sharpe and the rebellion. It is a useful blending of history and literature. But we still await a more nuanced analysis of Sharpe himself.

Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica. CHARLES PRICE. New York: New York University Press, 2009. xx + 267 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.00)

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“You cannot join Rastafari. It is not something you join. That is foolishness. It is something inside of you, an inspiration that come forward” (Ras Sam Brown, p. 6).

The voice of the scholar has sounded the way Rastafari has been inscribed in history. This account by Charles Price is a refreshingly non-*otherizing* take of the establishment of the character of the Rastafari worldview. Price has also managed to preserve the transcripts of a generation of fast declining Rastafari elders through a *retrospective* ethnography. This has been used as a picturesque ground to demonstrate the inner logic of the New World African’s metamorphoses of identity and establishment of community, as linked to Black identity transformation theorizing. We are thus facilitated on an exploration into realizations of Rastafari as both destination and ongoing process in the context of nigrescence theory. In this way Price removes the meta-narrative of Rastafari *becoming*, usually almost entirely anchored in resistance, to ground the ontology as one of *being*.

Furthermore, the story of Rastafari is most often constructed from its points of origin as narratives of the founding pillars of the movement whose

now mythic contributions establish the framework of the emergent Rastafari identity. The engagement of the congregation within the Rastafari experience is sometimes taken for granted and especially the members' journey(s) into the fold of the Movement is insufficiently taken into account. In this contribution by Price, the Jamaican Rastafari is brought into light as highly "contrived" racialized agents within the postcolonial national reconstruction process. This is significant largely due to the sophisticated logic employed by the Movement to incorporate the very essential margins of the society – as accomplices and teachers within the struggle for becoming African (again).

Price is therefore able to share the patterns of transformation to Rastafari, as largely represented and "involving the careful identification of a specific experience or set of experiences that moved the narrator [a 'convert'] into the path of becoming Rastafari" (p. 99). This is further actualizing the notion of "each one teach one," prevalent with the Rastafari movement as it relates to the almost insidious method of proselytizing the faith.

It is commendable that Price has taken the time to look at the Rastafari movement from the point of a close walk with some individuals who may have been overlooked by other researchers. The product he thus renders is a highly sensitive scholarly tome which can be likened to a scribe/translator/disciple on a pilgrimage and encountering guardians/sages en route. This has given him a genuine intimacy with the lives and most importantly the stories carried by these individuals. To this extent Price resurrects that tradition observable in the work of early scholars such as Carole Yawney, Jake Homiak, and Barry Chevannes through their anthropological methods. However, given the project brought by Price, his scrutiny is decidedly new, especially as he is able to place this engagement within a wider African American process of becoming, and in so doing he achieves a level of universal measurability and value.

Becoming Rasta is also timely for its archival value as it is able, through its excavation of identities, to illustrate and preserve the painstaking, and often missed, narratives of self-actualization that established the framework for subsequent Rastafari generations to negotiate the African Presence. The referencing of individuals such as Sam Brown and Mortimo Planno help us to understand the pedagogical roles such leaders played in the urban space in inspiring the transformation to Rastafari and sustaining the congregations. The notion of genuine learning about the neglected aspect of the African self and the way this knowledge gave "a feeling of belonging" or "a brighter perception of the future" provides a sketch of the dearth of African information and the struggle to insert this content within a colonial Jamaican landscape. The stories of co-existence in Babylon, while seeking not to compromise the Rastafari revelation of human freedom, are thickly represented; the battle for space – bulldozing of Rasta settlements; the fact that Mortimo Planno lived in an abandoned car for four years; the search for a new and pure language with the teaching/learning of Amharic language in Kingston; the search for *our* history

within and without the Bible; the ambivalence about education as presented officially/institutionally; and the thirst for genuine knowledge and sovereignty.

The testimonies of Rasta Ivey, Brother Dee, Brother Bongo, Ras Brenton, Brother Yendis, Empress Dinah, and others are immortalized through this account – broadening their respective contributions from that of idiosyncratic manifestations of the Rastafari faith and locating them within a wider Pan-African conversation about the postcolonial reconstruction of an African worldview. Perhaps this is the most subtle and overarching contribution of *Becoming Rasta* – the articulation of an often dismissed element of Africa in the Caribbean who are able to challenge global hegemony by going truly within. This capacity inspired by the leadership of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I becomes a new way of being.

This has been articulated with scientific precision without a loss of the novelized entertainment value. To this extent Price's reading of Rastafari is a part of what Planno would describe as a new Faculty of Interpretation, and further expands on the textual representation of Rastafari as a diasporic way of being – indeed, as expressed by Yasus Afari Rastafari poet, as a Jamaican “gift” to the world.

Reggaeton. RAQUEL Z. RIVERA, WAYNE MARSHALL & DEBORAH PACINI HERNANDEZ (eds.). Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2009. xiv + 371 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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In spite of premature predictions of its demise, reggaeton music is still very much alive and leaves no one indifferent. *Reggaeton*, edited by Raquel Z. Rivera, Wayne Marshall, and Deborah Pacini Hernandez, provides the first in-depth review of this musical phenomenon, which took the Caribbean and the Latin American diaspora by storm starting in the 1990s.

As Frances Negrón-Muntaner mentions in the last article of the volume, “Poetry of Filth,” the reasons reggaeton is perceived as cultural “trash” by the state, intellectuals, and the general public are many. Among other things, its lyrics and symbolism are associated with sexuality and the body. In addition,

it is largely the “trashy” groups with little social prestige that consume this music, at least in Puerto Rico. Hypermasculinity and a sexualization of the female body are also among the most obvious features associated with reggaeton that have an impact on its position and value in our contemporary world.

In many respects, the *Reggaeton* volume demystifies this recent musical phenomenon – which does indeed have significant socioeconomic resonance – by addressing five main themes: its origins, its localities and geographic specificities, its visual representations, the gender factor, and poetic, political, and aesthetic dimensions. The contributions to these themes provide in-depth examples, interviews, case studies, pictures, and interpretations that shed light on how reggaeton emerged as a distinct sound and how it is articulated today by its producers, fans, critics, and listeners. In this sense, the book’s main purpose is to valorize, name, and map the reggaeton phenomenon, and in this endeavor it is indeed successful.

Wayne Marshall’s thorough article, “From Música Negra to Reggaeton Latino,” is especially noteworthy for its exploration of reggaeton’s “complex history of social and sonic circuitry” (p. 19). In other words, Marshall addresses how reggaeton’s aesthetics, contours, and enduring forms are intertwined with the history of the genre. Reggaeton’s genealogy is still the subject of intense debate in public discourse. Marshall’s ethnomusicological approach allows him to argue that reggaeton’s rhythmic orientations derive from dancehall reggae and overlap with other Caribbean dance genres. His interpretation is a clear reminder that the Caribbean archipelago is a musical region characterized by ongoing contacts and exchanges. Puerto Rico nevertheless keeps a strong claim on reggaeton as the main site – Jamaica and Panama notwithstanding – where it has gone from underground phenomenon to crystallized commercial form, from “musica negra” to “Reggaeton Latino,” from marginal to mainstream.

Adding to the polemical genealogy of reggaeton, Deborah Pacini Hernandez’s insightful article recasts the inputs of Dominicans in the emergence and sonority of reggaeton. Hernandez effectively shows how different narratives of musical origins might coexist and how the ownership of such constructions is embedded within localities.

In looking at issues of censorship and morality in the 1990s in Puerto Rico, Raquel Z. Rivera recalls the links between art, reality, and marginality. She identifies the essence of the aesthetics of *undergroundness* in this specific context by exploring broader issues of enforcement, contestation, social order, and morality. As a result, reggaeton is situated in relation to other art forms that have given rise to comparable dynamics in the past.

The contributions of Geoff Baker and Jan Fairley on reggaeton in Cuba position this ultra-commercial phenomenon within a unique socialist context. Their respective ethnographic input and focus on the dance dimension (i.e. the body) suggest, from a reception standpoint, how reggaeton is embodied

and expressed in a distinct way. Furthermore, although she wonders if she might be an “old prune” when examining issues of women and feminism, Fairley brings to light a critical and necessary approach to reggaeton.

This last point prompts me to question the apparent obsession of intellectuals with issues of resistance and marginality rather than less “attractive” dynamics such as resilience and conformity. Allow me to explain.

The volume is full of cases depicting alternative models of representation. For instance, Frances Negrón-Muntaner puts Calle 13 into relation with surrealist trends in art while highlighting that it is the first “*intellectual* group of reggaeton” (p. 328; my emphasis). Alfredo Nieves Moreno shows that the two members of Calle 13, Residente and Visitante, present an alternative construction of masculinity, mainly through video clips. Plainly said, this form of masculinity could be described as less damaging toward women than the hyper-masculine form of objectification usually observed in mainstream reggaeton. Glory, the female back-vocal singer who remained in the shadows of famous reggaetoneros for years, is presented by Félix Jiménez as an educated woman who tried to rise as an artist by adopting a different aesthetic and discourse from that of Ivy Queen – another strong personality within the genre whose pedagogical potential is argued by author Alexandra T. Vazquez. These types of examples thread their way through the volume to show that such players are involved in the articulation of alternative forms of representation within reggaeton networks.

Although these are all insightful and noteworthy contributions, *Reggaeton* has made me reflect on certain issues. Is there a danger in over-intellectualizing a popular form of expression? What can be said of producers and artists who are not engaged in such alternative reconfigurations? Without falling into Puritanism, it would have been worthwhile to reflect on how the mainstream is reinforced by a series of conveyed values, including the status of women and racial representation. As Puerto Rican hip-hop artist Welmo E. Romero reminds us: “you have to give audiences what they like” (p. 318). Issues of mass consumption and reception need to be addressed seriously.

This multifaceted and comprehensive volume is an essential reference that goes beyond music by touching on issues related to popular youth culture in the Americas. Articles written by artists and visual texts, including pictures by Miguel Luciano and Kacho López as well as stills by Carolina Caycedo, are refreshing and speak for themselves, providing rich sources of aesthetic and discursive referents. They, too, are essential contributions. To quote the lyrics of Don Omar in *Dale Don Dale*, this book will certainly “fire up the crew” (*Pa’ activar los anormales*) to generate fruitful discussion and new avenues for investigating today’s popular youth culture.

Carriacou String Band Serenade: Performing Identity in the Eastern Caribbean. REBECCA S. MILLER. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2007. xviii + 269 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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String band music developed throughout the Caribbean during the nineteenth century. Although commonalities may exist, loosely connecting the islands' traditions, a pan-Caribbean analysis remains difficult. The music comprises an assortment of instrument combinations, absorbed into a variety of sacred and secular genres. Adapted and modified to fit local circumstances, string band music provides a worthwhile tool for studying some of the Caribbean's cultural and social complexities. Despite its potential relevance, however, the music has received only nominal research, making Rebecca S. Miller's *Carriacou String Band Serenade* – the first-ever book on the topic – a welcome addition to existing scholarship. Her thoughtful approach to the materials and detail of research make this book a particularly strong and exciting contribution.

Miller creates an ethnography that meshes Carriacou's string band tradition with the island's complex political, social, and cultural history. The Parang Festival, a three-day event held on the weekend before Christmas, provides the backdrop for her analysis. Evolving out of Grenada's 1979 Socialist Revolution and developing more recently into a tourist attraction, the Parang Festival represents a powerful vehicle for interpreting Carriacou's complex history. In Miller's analysis, the festival and its accompanying concerts and competitions are placed at the center of popular culture, where conflicts between dominant and subordinate groups are played out, and where Kayak (Carriacouan) identity and cultural forms are produced and negotiated. Such issues as globalization, "cultural ambivalence," technology, and "authenticity" emerge integral to the discussion. Juxtaposed to the book's detailed musical information, they draw readers into the Parang's fluid and heterogeneous character.

Miller writes that there has been a breakdown of "authenticity" in Parang, which sorely divides musicians, audiences, and festival governing boards. Arguments over Parang's history are particularly heated, with some bands demanding that they "perform in a style true to the perceived Latin American and Trinidadian origins of Parang, while other bands insist that Carriacou's own style of parang music is authentic in itself" (p. 171). Audiences, too, are conflicted, with some people overtly refusing to attend festival proceedings,

complaining that string band music is “a dying tradition” that “carries traumatic association with an enslaved and colonized past” (p. 62); others convincingly argue that Parang “deserves support because it remains a part of the Carriacouan cultural heritage” (p. 63). Entwined in this controversy are questions of identity: persons who believe that parang music is Latin American or Trinidadian in origin may use the music to take claim to a Caribbean – and in some instances pan-African – identity; while others who accept parang as a Carriacou tradition use it to share a strictly Kayak identity; and persons who see parang’s roots as both Carriacouan and Trinidadian (or Latin American) use the music to convey a collective sense of “twoness” – a simultaneous belonging to both Carriacou and a greater, pan-Caribbean diaspora (pp. 45, 95).

Fueling controversy are the festival’s rigorous judging criteria. Offering the Hosannah band (a capella singing) competition as a model for discussion, Miller argues that current judging standards “are more congruent with the aesthetics of formal choral singing than with what was once a spontaneous, community-based religious tradition” (p. 114). Nonetheless, participants’ “rank in the competition is absolutely dependent on meeting these criteria” (p. 113), forcing many band members to seek “[outside] assistance in order to adapt their singing style to the contemporary musical aesthetic demanded by the judging criteria” (p. 100). Rehearsals, traditionally a place for musicians and audiences to socialize, have necessarily changed. Now closed to the public, practices are a place for intense learning, “where you can concentrate and just keep your mind on what you want to do and what you are planning for” (p. 169). Parang’s traditional role in community serenading also has waned: musicians are simply too busy preparing for the competitions to participate in serenading (p. 168).

Further complicating these tensions, Miller argues, is folklorization, “the act of canonizing and, typically, standardizing what were once essentially community-based artistic expressions” (p. 216). Because Parang is responsible for “rais[ing] funds for charitable purposes in Carriacou during the upcoming year” (p. 217), event organizers feel it necessary to make the festival part of a larger marketing strategy, imposing changes that they believe will attract American and European tourists. To that effort, the traditional Christmas garland decorating festival stages has been replaced with island-themed decor; and participating band members, previously dressed in street clothes, now are expected to wear matching Caribbean-themed outfits. While some musicians and audiences may support the changes, seeing them as inevitable marks of time (pp. 108, 218), others “insist on the old ways” (p. 108), complaining that these specific changes reflect a potentially dangerous process of Americanization (p. 220).

By concentrating on Parang’s volatile position in society Miller’s book exposes the complex – and problematic – role of tradition in the lives of the Carriacou people. As Miller shows, the divergent meanings attached to

Parang may be socially constructed, but, taken collectively, emerge themselves part of a social force, able to impose change on Kayak society as easily as absorb it. In the end, crucial knowledge is revealed not only about the situational nature of tradition but also about the complex dynamics surrounding the creation of collective meaning.

Caribbean Visionary: A.R.F. Webber and the Making of the Guyanese Nation. SELWYN R. CUDJOE. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. xiii + 278 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00)

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Biographies used to be rare in the Anglophone Caribbean. People need a sense of their collective achievement before they feel confident enough to write about their achievers. It is no coincidence, therefore, that several such works have been published in the region in the last fifteen years, for Caribbean historiography has acquired self-confidence since the founding of the University of the West Indies Press and Ian Randle Publishers in the early 1990s. The foundation has been laid.

Selwyn Cudjoe's biography of A.R.F. Webber (1880-1932) is thoroughly researched, persuasive and provocative enough to challenge a new generation of scholars to research further into the greatest Guyanese editor and politician of the 1920s and early 1930s. Born in Tobago of colored or mixed heritage, he migrated to British Guiana in 1899. He started in the gold and diamond industry in the interior of the colony, worked with the Chamber of Commerce, and even became secretary of the Sugar Planters' Association. Cudjoe suggests that he might have had a stint as an overseer with the Davsons' sugar estates. These seminal links spoke of a man who could have become implacably wedded to the old order, yet he became one of the most progressive editors and politicians in the British West Indies.

As editor of the *Daily Chronicle* (1919-25) and the *New Daily Chronicle* (1926-30), and as a legislator (1921-32), Webber was the most articulate and consistent protagonist of the underdog, whatever their race. He fought the colonial rulers without fear, and at great personal cost, challenging their

complacency on the crucial question of drainage and irrigation for the coastland; the necessity to foster a culture of research to stimulate new crops among small farmers; and the exploration of the potential of the interior of the colony to initiate economic diversification. He was also a fervent advocate of a federation of the West Indies and of constitutional advance, paving the way for self-government. Cudjoe observes: "As a result of his ardor and passion for self-government, his fearlessness and his eloquence in expressing his people's sentiments for freedom, Webber became the leading figure in the Guyanese people's struggle for liberation" (p. 85). In a society where one's ethnicity was already the paramount instrument of identity, Webber sought to forge the rudiments of a more inclusive one: "[He] transcended the limitation of his colour and his class and became one with his people" (p. 221).

Cudjoe attributes this partially to Fabian socialism, absorbed during Webber's travels in England. He was a pioneer of a tradition that would gain ascendancy in the British West Indies from the late 1930s. This is an under-researched area of inquiry, the pedigree of this fascinating trajectory of the political evolution of the Anglophone Caribbean, the aberration of Cheddi Jagan's Marxism notwithstanding. It is also noteworthy, as Cudjoe points out, that Webber's family (possibly he too) had strong links with the Davsons' sugar plantations. The Davsons were uncharacteristically progressive capitalists in colonial Guyana, being pioneers of reform in health (employing the great malariologist, Dr. George Giglioli), housing, and social welfare. This, also, is arguably the source of Webber's transformation from "planter's man" to a man of the people.

My only regret about the book concerns the typographical errors. Cudjoe has not been well served by the editors of the Caribbean Studies Series of the University Press of Mississippi. For instance, Sir Lionel Luckhoo is cited as "Lucky" (p. 8) and he is incorrectly referred to as the son of J.A. Luckhoo (p. 88), who went to India in 1919 and advocated an "Indian colony" in British Guiana. The latter is also mistaken for E.A. Luckhoo, the father of Sir Lionel (p. 87). E.A. Luckhoo becomes "Luckoo" (p. 161). J.A. Luckhoo is cited as "Luchoo" (p. 239) and, on the same page, Dr. William Hewley Wharton is referred to as "Dr. Hewley." Governor Sir Cecil Rodwell becomes "Rowell" (twice on p. 61); the British Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA) is rendered as "BGEAI" (p. 64, twice on p. 87, and again on p. 134); Sam Lupton, editor of the *Daily Argosy* in the 1920s, becomes "Lumpton" (four times on p. 86). The Abary River or Abary Creek (as it is commonly called) is cited as "Araby River" (p. 142, thrice on p. 145, and again on p. 166). And there are others.

But this must not detract from a most impressive biography of a great West Indian. It deserves to be published in a paperback edition and to be read by scholars and politicians, as well as the public. It is at the very fount of the West Indian achievement in democratic governance and liberal democracy.

Cudjoe's own achievement is epitomized by his resolve to find Webber's tomb: "The grave was covered with shady jamoon trees, wiruni downs and razor blade grass, a typical West Indian plant with sharp edges ... When I finally discovered the tomb, I saw that the original marble headstone had been removed ... Locating Webber's tomb brought an end to my journey ... as I cleared away the trees and plants that had overtaken his final resting place ... Not only did I have to reconstruct his life, I also had to liberate his tomb from the overwhelming forces of nature that had threatened to erase his memory" (p. 231). There can be no doubt that Webber's memory is now imperishable, and for that we owe a great debt to Selwyn Cudjoe.

Guyana Diaries: Women's Lives Across Difference. KIMBERLY D. NETTLES. Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press, 2008. 316 pp. (Paper US\$ 34.95)

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This book is published within Left Coast Press's "Writing Lives: Ethnographic Narratives" Series, "devoted to exploring and publishing narrative representations of qualitative research projects." In it, Kimberly Nettles returns to the personal diary she kept while conducting doctoral fieldwork in the mid-1990s with resource and community members of Red Thread, a women's organization in Guyana. In the first section, "Introductions," we are drawn into her decision to write about her journal entries; the second section, "Guyana Diaries," consists of nine chapters that tack back and forth between life histories and her emotional responses not only to the women interviewed but to a range of other encounters during her sojourn in the country.

Guyana Diaries, then, is deeply concerned with the affective dimensions of the process of fieldwork. Nettles finds autoethnography the best vehicle to tell this particular story, in which she attempts to "document both the lives of other people and the simultaneous exploration of the researcher's relationship to the subject(s) of study" (p. 33). The book effortlessly accomplishes the second of these objectives, decentering the researcher as the distanced and all-knowing subject and offering in its stead a plotline whose themes are contingency, misrecognition, and disjuncture. Readers are also given access to the emotionally

fraught process that led to Nettles's decision to reveal the "backstory," through a discussion charting both personal and professional itineraries (geographical as well as institutional) that are increasingly impossible to separate. The diaries simply refused to disappear, serving as a constant reminder that if the decision to conduct qualitative interviews was meant as a corrective to Nettles's dissatisfaction with the demands for objectivity required by her earlier quantitative analysis of the sexual division of labor in Guyana, bracketing these complicated entanglements ironically reproduced the same effect.

It is Chapter 9, the interview with Andaiye, that provides the key to this text. (Her original name was Sandra Williams, not Sandra Brown as indicated in the text, p. 48.) Andaiye's looping narrative of her journey from childhood to Red Thread – a journey that is non-linear and incomplete but that also cannot be divorced from the issue of wider accountability, as she reminds Nettles in an uncomfortable e-mail exchange reported in the second chapter – offers an important way of thinking of home as a material, spiritual, and political space linking all of the stories, including Nettles's own.

The search for home enables Nettles not only to write herself back into the text, but crucially to return to and name her experiences of feeling out of place and disconnected in Guyana. She writes compellingly of the ways in which her research project – to work with women-of-color communities – was nurtured by her diasporic longing for identification as a black woman. She reflects with refreshing honesty on how this desire was interrupted by growing uneasiness in "the field" and recognition of the differences of nation and class that interrupted any easy solidarity with the women of Red Thread. (Anthropologist Brackette Williams captures this dynamic perfectly in her reference to "skinfolk not kinfolk" [1996].) A series of wonderfully narrated encounters throws this tension into relief: being jolted into recognition of the geopolitics of privilege that differentiate her as an American in Guyana; the casually racist description of working-class Afro-Guyanese boys by her Indo-Guyanese hosts which situates Nettles as an outsider while also revealing the complications of racial formation in class-stratified Guyana; her informal meeting with other North Americans which reflects back to some of the troubling processes of othering she also cannot escape.

Nettles expresses the hope that finding her own voice "does not eclipse the power of the Red Thread women's stories for the reader" (p. 33). Certainly the interviews are rich, accompanied by evocative descriptions of the women's home environments that add a layer of texture to the narratives. There is a lot of material here, and some important themes that cut across all the stories, in particular the caring unwaged work performed by the women that stitches households and communities together and the emphasis by all of the interviewees on coming to voice (overcoming shyness) through their involvement with Red Thread.

The power of these stories (the effort to “document the lives of other people”) is, however, limited by an overall inattention to the conditions of possibility that shape and are shaped by the narratives. The understandably abbreviated glance backward in Chapter 1 glosses over some important points. There is, for example, no reference to external forces in the destabilization of the popular anticolonial movement of the 1950s and reference to riots as the reason for the end of indentureship is inaccurate. Given the focus of the book, this chapter should, arguably, have been reoriented to specify how these shifts were complexly gendered. Strangely, the historical reference then ends around the mid-1980s with the formation of Red Thread as an autonomous woman’s organization. We are left with a gap of more than a decade, then, for by the time Nettles embarks on her interviews with the women in 1996, authoritarian rule has been replaced by electoral democracy in 1992 (with little shift, however, in the racialized political landscape), and the country has moved from a declared developmental agenda of co-operative socialism to accepting the terms of an IMF structural adjustment program. While there are some cursory references to these shifts, such as mention of unemployment and a growing sense of hopelessness in the bauxite mining town where several of the interviews were conducted, this lack of attention to the wider context that constitutes the everyday for participants is a significant oversight. It has the unfortunate effect of disconnecting the interviews from time and place; it becomes difficult to really locate them. While there is a sense that Red Thread is not standing still, we are unable to comprehend the shifts at work here, to locate the changing meanings the women attribute to their work with the organization, to grasp the sense of fluidity Nettles identifies in 1996. What does it mean to say that Red Thread was in a “reflective moment?” (p. 34). How to reconcile the identified “sense of concern about the future of Red Thread” in 1996 (p. 34) with a letter from the organization a decade later asking for support for women to attend the World Social Forum in Venezuela and making it clear that Red Thread is an active part of a transnational web of connections via the Global Strike Network?

Given this omission, at best we could say (as the book does) that Red Thread continues to organize with women in a climate of scarcity. Perhaps we might even speculate that it has since emerged from its period of reflection. But at some level this is a statement that while perhaps accurate, says very little.

One intention of the text was to explore how life histories and personal trajectories offer clues to the women’s commitment to Red Thread and their efforts to negotiate their work across several domains in a sustaining way. It is surprising, given how much of the women’s lives revolve around Red Thread, that we glimpse so little of their work and exchanges there.

And although there are a few significant instances in which the women talk about navigating differences of class and race/ethnicity, the discussion

would have been enriched if these tantalizing leads had been pursued and if more attention had been paid to the women's interactions with each other. This, along with the relative absence of context, ends up weighting the book more heavily in favor of the "exploration of the researcher's relationship to the subjects of study," (p. 33) but even here some nuance and insight is also compromised as a result. From the beginning, Nettles indicates that she is drawn to Red Thread because it represents an attempt to bring Guyanese women together across debilitating enactments of difference. *Guyana Diaries* reveals the researcher's exploration of self through these strange and familiar encounters, but if Nettles is concerned with writing through "the friction of that meeting" (p. 33), the Guyanese women represented in this text have been grappling with the self-other dynamic in their midst. It is difference and misrecognition that serve as their Achilles heel and postcolonial inheritance, which mediate their efforts to find connections with each other. Michelle's analysis of class difference in Chapter 6 makes it clear that women do not stand in the same place and that hierarchies structure their relationships to each other. If the friction of their meeting is their self-conscious, explicit point of departure, then describing Red Thread as a multiracial coalition (p. 232) does not leave us much clearer on precisely what work is entailed to accomplish this daily, the odds one has to constantly battle to overcome, the mis-steps along the way, the accretion of experiences upon which solidarity is tentatively and painstakingly built. Andaiye's response to her personal history being made public is simple: "There has to be some point to their knowing this, other than just getting it off my chest" (p. 271). In this tightly woven and otherwise compelling narrative, one wishes we had seen deeper engagement with the way the women face not just the researcher but also themselves, to help us reckon with women's lives across difference. One suspects that deeper in these encounters resided perhaps the most valuable lessons about accountability to be learned not just by the author, but indeed by us all.

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Writers of the Caribbean Diaspora: Shifting Homelands, Travelling Identities. JASBIR JAIN & SUPRIYA AGARWAL (eds.). Kingston: Ian Randle, 2009. x + 288 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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Literary pieces such as essays on Caribbean literature, a memoir, an interview, and even appendices by Mahatma Gandhi contribute to the eclectic feel of this collection. Editors Jasbir Jain and Supriya Agarwal collected papers presented at a seminar on Indo-Caribbean writing in Jaipur, and solicited essays on canonical writers such as George Lamming, Jean Rhys, and Jamaica Kincaid in order to present a wide discussion of the issues central to Caribbean writing.

The volume opens with Cyril Dabydeen's reflections on growing up in Guyana and the ways in which the juxtaposition of coastland and hinterland influenced his conception of time, space, and language. In a second essay, "Negotiating V.S. Naipaul," Dabydeen contemplates his life as a writer, acknowledging Naipaul's influence on his own writing and his admiration for Naipaul's work as it evolved over the years. Vishnupriya Sengupta provides another essay on V.S. Naipaul, "The Politics of Historical Reconstruction: A Study of V.S. Naipaul's *The Loss of El Dorado* and *A Way in the World*," offering an insightful analysis of Naipaul's meticulous historical research into the Caribbean, a region Naipaul has paradoxically disavowed.

The collection also has essays on V.S. Naipaul's father, Seepersad Naipaul, and his brother, Shiva Naipaul. For Purabi Panwar, Seepersad Naipaul's use of language shows his desire to create an ethnic identity in the diasporic space of Trinidad. And Madhuri Chatterjee discusses Shiva Naipaul's metaphors of disintegration in his novel *The Chip Chip Gatherers* (1973).

Three essays on Samuel Selvon, read consecutively as they appear, give readers a view of some of the concerns in Selvon's work. M. Rosary Royar's essay on *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* (1972) shows that underlying Selvon's fiction are deep engagements with race and colonial structures. Surpiya Agarwal explores the personal conflicts of Selvon's characters in the political transition from colonialism to independence, and Charu Mathur examines Selvon's representation of Indo-Trinidadians living in a society in transition.

Arnold Itwaru's work is discussed in two essays. The first, by Mini Nanda, suggests that Itwaru's characters negotiate the past and the present in postcolonial Guyana, moving toward new identities. The second, by Indira

Babbellapati, lists several themes associated with diaspora including food, relationships, religion, and gender. Babbellapati's essay, Manveen Brar's essay on Jean Rhys, and Sudha Rai's on Indo-Caribbean short stories are similar because they each cast a wide net, ending up by glossing over their main theses as they attempt to cover too many themes at once.

With multiple essays on Naipaul, Selvon, and Itwaru, there is an overwhelming sense that this collection is really structured around the Jaipur conference on Indo-Caribbean writing. The essays that were solicited to widen the focus of the collection do not really evoke a sense of balance, although they do raise some interesting observations.

Jasbir Jain's comparative essay on E.R. Braithwaite and Caryl Phillips argues that both authors "compel the reader to open out histories of imperialism and the meaning of progress" (p. 53). Punam Gupta makes a similar point about Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1985), noting that Kincaid discloses colonial relations through the mother-daughter relationship.

It is unfortunate that the editors chose to include a previously published essay by David Dabydeen, "Teaching West Indian Literature in Britain" (1997). In this reactionary piece, Dabydeen rants against what he calls "Western" academic theories, but then uses the term "postmodern" without irony to describe the Amerindians of the Guyanese interior. Dabydeen celebrates the fact that these Amerindians "carry no passports, seek no visas" (p. 37) and recognize no national boundaries. These factors effectively place Amerindians outside of historical processes and social movements, and normalize their marginal position within the Guyanese nation-state.

While David Dabydeen dismisses academic theories, there is an attempt by some of the contributors to this collection to acknowledge theories relevant to Caribbean literature. C. Vijayshree, for example, locates Austin Clarke's *The Polished Hoe* (2003) in the literary tradition of slave narratives, and Asma Shamaï examines how Paule Marshall combines social, spiritual, and mythic aspects of African, African-American, and Caribbean cultures to create a hybrid genre of fiction. Jayita Sengupta makes reference to critical writing on Indo-Caribbean women in her essay on Lakshmi Persaud.

The volume ends with Elaine Savory's interview with Ramabai Espinet, and appendices of Mahatma Gandhi's short essays on indenture. Taken together with the previous memoir and essays, these pieces emphasize the collection's incongruous style of assembly.

In general, while the essays in this volume make reference to some post-colonial and psychoanalytic theories in a limited way, the majority do not show any real engagement with the main theories underlying Caribbean literary studies found, for instance, in the works of writers such as C.L.R. James, Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Édouard Glissant, Carole Boyce-Davies, and Brinda Mehta. The editors' introduction argues that Caribbean literature is a new field to many Indian scholars and worthy of investigation. This investigation,

however, necessarily requires familiarity with current scholarship, and an appreciation of the main theoretical concepts that have framed this region's literature, especially those articulated by scholars who work in the field.

Queen of the Virgins: Pageantry and Black Womanhood in the Caribbean.
M. CYNTHIA OLIVER. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. x + 182 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00)

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Cynthia Oliver's *Queen of the Virgins* is an engaging analysis of beauty pageants, or "queen shows," in the U.S. Virgin Islands in particular and the Caribbean in general. Oliver's ability to move nimbly between a discussion of the importance of queen shows in the Caribbean region broadly and an examination of the ways in which pageants are particularly relevant to the USVI contributes greatly to this text. Arguing that the political status of the USVI as a territory of the United States geographically located in the Caribbean has led to an ambivalent relationship between the USVI and its island-neighbors, Oliver presents the world of pageantry as a proxy for this relationship, viewing queen shows as productions that situate the territory firmly within the Caribbean region as a result of the extensive inter-island borrowing of people and ideas that characterizes Virgin Islands pageantry. Importantly, however, Oliver theorizes pageants complexly, understanding Virgin Islands queen shows on one hand as pan-Caribbean events that draw heavily on the talents of "aesthetic consultants and participants" (p. 58), and on the other hand as the stage on which the Virgin Islands negotiates its global presence and relationship to modernity.

While Oliver makes much of the cultural borrowing that takes places in Virgin Islands pageantry, presenting these productions as *bricolage*, combinations of regional aesthetics and participants, she pays little attention to the often-negative reception offered to Caribbean residents who migrate to the USVI. That is, while making much of the ideas and aesthetics that contribute to Virgin Islands pageantry, she underplays the reality often experienced by the bodies that make this trip. She does note the existence of tensions between

U.S. Virgin Islanders and immigrants from neighboring islands (describing this as an “overwhelming wariness among islanders, a persistent fear that outsiders will take advantage of locals” [p. 95]), but grossly underplays the levels of xenophobia faced by Caribbean immigrants in the USVI, a situation about which Norwell Harrigan and Pearl Varlack write, “the despised and rejected [immigrants] came to be known as ‘garrots.’ So far as aliens were concerned, there was little that the average native addressed himself to in a rational manner. All the ills of society were laid at their feet, from unsanitary conditions to the failure of children to learn in schools” (Harrigan & Varlack 1977:407). Thus, celebrated choreographers and makeup artists from the Caribbean region may indeed play an important role in the production of Virgin Islands queen shows, yet it remains crucial to note the limits of such mobility.

Pushing beyond an analysis that dismisses queen shows as superficial contests over beauty, this text argues that “beauty is clearly a code word for a larger set of concerns,” including national identity and struggles over power, class, and mobility (p. 151). Troubling a stable notion of beauty, Oliver contextualizes shifting notions by pointing to the relationship between race, particularly whiteness, and notions of beauty. Demonstrating the inseparability of race and understandings of beauty, she devotes the first half of *Queen of the Virgins* to a discussion of “before-time” queens, a group that included slave women who negotiated their place in society and pushed against the understanding that only white women could be beautiful. Despite the ideological division that separated black womanhood from beauty and royalty, slave women actively created spaces such as masquerades which acknowledged their existence as both persons and (beautiful) women, events that Oliver presents as precursors to contemporary beauty pageants.

Throughout *Queen of the Virgins*, Oliver makes it clear that pageants are more than events in which (even historicized) beauty is on display. Rather, she theorizes these productions as spaces in which discourses regarding the nation, and national identity, occur. Importantly for her analysis, this discourse takes place through the bodies of the young women vying for various titles, as queen shows present the answers to such questions as “who are we, and what defines us?” (p. 78). Oliver argues that discourses about the (raced, classed, and gendered) identity of the nation are grafted onto the bodies of queen show contestants, with audiences accepting the winners as “symbol[s] of a unified Virgin Islands in tune with a greater Caribbean and world culture. [They] suspend the ‘real’ in favor of imagining themselves as a unified nation ... and imagining what ideal island women look like and what they are capable of” (p. 149).

If pageants are a space in which the nation is gendered (relying, as noted by Oliver, on the trope of nation-as-woman), they are also a space where classed and colored national identities are decided. Historicizing the class/color hierarchy in the Virgin Islands, Oliver links the continued success of long-prominent families in Virgin Islands beauty pageants to the donation-driven “popular-

ity contests” of an earlier moment (competitions directly linked to one’s network). Both then and now, “these contests uncover issues of class and shade as they reveal who wields power in the communities” (p. 14). Beyond serving as sites where existing class relations are played out, Oliver argues that pageants are attempts to mold young women into particular classed positions, a project accomplished by the policing of contestants’ bodies and behaviors and resulting in their move from “raw” to “refined.” Describing this transition, she writes: “contestants elect to go through the rigors of ‘training,’ to enter as raw material and emerge as refined specimens proffered by the community as emblems of what is black and beautiful and Caribbean and woman” (p. 84).

Queen of the Virgins is a valuable contribution to Caribbean Studies, literature on beauty and race, nationalism, and Women’s Studies. With the exception of an underdeveloped discussion of audience members’ desire for the failure of pageant contestants (Chapter 7), the sections of this book build upon one another productively, situating contemporary pageantry in a long trajectory of debates over beauty and allowing readers to see beyond the smiling image of the beauty queen.

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Notions of Identity, Diaspora, and Gender in Caribbean Women’s Writing. BRINDA MEHTA. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. x + 232 pp. (Cloth US\$ 80.00)

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Brinda Mehta’s most recent book relies on a solid theoretical framework. Aimed at critiquing a series of Francophone texts, it makes one exception and dedicates a whole chapter to Edwidge Danticat’s *The Dew Breaker*. Her analysis of this “narrative kaleidoscope,” as she defines the book is as deep and stimulating as are the studies of Evelyne Trouillot’s *Rosalie l’infâme* and

Giséle Pineau's *Un papillon dans la cité* and *L'Exil selon Julia*, which are discussed in single chapters. In contrast, Laure Moutoussamy and Maryse Condé are discussed together to examine the figure of the male and female *dougla* in Antillean literature. Finally, a chapter entitled "The Voice of Sycorax" brings together Ina Césaire's play *Mémoires d'Isles*, Myriam Chancy's novel *The Scorpion's Claw*, Lila Desquiron's *Reflections of Loko Miwa*, and Dany Bebel-Gisler's *Léonora: l'Histoire enfouie de la Guadeloupe*.

All this makes for a dense and intense volume which, because of its structure and the rare cross references, reads more like a collection of essays on diaspora, gender, and identity than a unitary volume. This is a plus for readers who can choose to focus on single chapters where they will find a rich array of suggestions for thinking through gender and the traumas of dislocation.

The novels Mehta has chosen are all woman-centered; Razyé from Maryse Condé's *La migration des coeurs* is as lonely here as in the life Condé has given him in her text. The characters all find themselves compelled or condemned to confront spectres of the past, a past in which colonial stereotyping, rape, and torture have left their marks either directly on them or on their foremothers. Thus the body, which "remembers its historicity" (p. 65), emerges as "a site of knowledge, resistance, memory and abjection" (p. 70). Nowhere is this more evident than in the pages dedicated to Evelyne Trouillot's *Rosalie l'infâme*, where the critic and the writer, both fuelled by anger, give the impression of simultaneously making the same journey. Set in colonial Saint-Domingue, Trouillot's novel is replete with the festering wounds of history in the form of pained psyches and scarred, gendered bodies like those branded with the ship's name, Rosalie. In Saint-Domingue, as in the other colonies, torture was couched under the name of punishment, a fact that allows Mehta a foray into the contemporary as she concludes that the word torture has been absent "in hegemonic Euro-American political discourses and foreign policy throughout history" (p. 37).

These lacunae as well as the "sanitized" versions of official discourses demand a counter-historiography that both the writers and Mehta are intent on producing: the former by writing novels based on "undocumented knowledge" and exposing old histories of insurrection, and the latter by offering readings like the ones contained in this volume. By reclaiming Sycorax, as Mehta explains in the last chapter, Caribbean women can reframe "the Caribbean in terms of female reason and intellectual thought" and engage in "a truly transformative and disruptive negotiation of Caribbean identity" (p. 127). The writings of Maryse Condé in her view are a case in point. But actually all the texts discussed are judged subversive: for one, they transform women from victims to active agents of history and creators of alternative cultural and religious systems. Through the popular and the oral as fundamental sources of knowledge, cooks, herbalists, healers, and midwives take on a new dimension: they are among those who have exploited the fractures in the colonial system and deserve to be reinstated in history.

Interest in the popular is evident in the discussion of Gisèle Pineau's HLM (low-income housing) dwellers in France. Guadeloupeans and Martiniquans have traded a healthy relationship to their land and culture for the material well-being offered by departmentalization. Already defined by France in their homeland, they are turned into metropolitan aliens by migration; still, they are able to find in cooking and eating redemptive moments. This *topos* of South Asian writing is here applied to the Antilleans and extended to their metropolitan North African neighbors. As the kitchen space mediates the necessary links with Guadeloupe, it comes to stand for the hearth, while the gustatory and olfactory pleasures cooking produces allow access to emotions buried under the necessities of living, tapping into individual and collective memory, inducing storytelling and genealogical bonds. Thus as the symbolic praxis of cooking is used by women to transcend their subaltern status, diaspora and memory become not only disabling but enabling spaces.

The very possibility of empowerment engendered by diaspora is the focus of the chapter on *The Dew Breaker*. There, Haitians who have migrated en masse to Flatbush, are allowed to recreate their lives, albeit in the shadow of their past, especially since the former *macoutes*, the state henchmen, have also taken refuge in the United States. The possibility of articulating interiorized pain makes the focus on language important in Mehta's text, as significant as are the links between body and dance explored in the first chapter. As these take on new contours, so does the very notion of Caribbeanness.

Following on ideas she had proposed in her previous volume, *Diasporic (Dis) locations* (2004), Mehta goes back to her criticism of *créolité*. Certainly a controversial notion ever since its publication in Barnabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant's 1990 book, *créolité* is once again taken to task. At the same time creole identity, traditionally understood as inclusive, is described as homogenizing and unable to include Indian ethnics present in the Caribbean. In Mehta's view creolization can only assimilate Indian culture into a dominant African cultural discourse. Thus, despite claims to being transitional and relational (Hall, Glissant) or of being a space without end or beginning (Benitez Rojo), creoleness has only proposed, as Shalini Puri would say, "unequal terms of inclusion" of other ethnicities. Creolization thus remains tainted and, like Shalini Puri in *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism and Cultural Hybridity* (2004), Mehta calls for a more inclusive paradigm: a *dougla poetics* which can better account for the Indo-Caribbean presence and "decenter the African origins of Creole culture" current in creolization discourses (p. 124).

Challenging grammar and language to respond to new needs is a task the women analyzed in this volume are intent on tackling. As Brinda Mehta points to new sites of cultural intervention in which these transnational women are involved, she turns both resistance and hybridity into very concrete acts and further illuminates the new gendered cartography of postcoloniality.

Authority and Authorship in V.S. Naipaul. IMRAAN COOVADIA. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. viii + 188 pp. (Cloth US\$ 80.00)

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Imraan Coovadia sets himself the impossible task of being “more interested in the nuances of Naipaul’s prose than in the ideological deficiencies of the author” (p. 13). The naive distinction here between form (style) and content (ideology) and the assumption that form involves no politics or ideology are symptomatic of the kinds of moves critics are forced to make in order to justify both Naipaul and their choosing to write about him.

Coovadia opens his book by simply adopting the assumptions of his subject which include such absurdities as the idea that Third World societies are “societies ... where cultural authority has yet to be established” (p. 2) and ones in which “because there is no writing ... there is no opportunity for self-understanding” (p. 8). As if this were not bad enough, he takes the view that violence in postcolonial societies is inevitable so that there is no need to intervene, take a position, or have moral agency (p. 10). And he sees Naipaul as undercutting twentieth-century liberal humanitarianism, confronting enlightened political opinion (p. 5), and showing the West how chaotic and arbitrary postcolonial countries are (p. 12).

Already, Coovadia is contradicting his aim not to talk of ideology but only of prose. While he fails to do this, as his attempt is to make the prose seem like a strategy that is somehow ideologically superior, and that confronts liberal humanitarianism (though it is never clear what the goal of the strategy or confrontation is), he does not offer any detailed study of Naipaul’s prose either. Coovadia outlines various rhetorical techniques he locates in Naipaul – allusion, misquotation, cold jokes, repetition, ekphrasis, and sensory intensity – but he does not show what authority they constitute and to what end. (The book’s central argument is that Naipaul constructs authority through his particular literary authorship.)

Further, Coovadia collapses characters and narrators into Naipaul’s biography. He claims that Naipaul’s nonfiction cannot be reduced to his positions in the fiction, but repeatedly reads both in mutually interchangeable ways, arguing that the elements of style are often the same. All this leads to an extraordinarily messy and frequently absurd book. In Chapter 1, for example, mainly about *A Bend in the River*, Coovadia claims that power and status, and not morality, are what count in the cosmos of the novel and yet Naipaul presents the paradoxical sentiments of the most powerless because

these sentiments challenge enlightened orthodoxy. Naipaul is both the neutral observer and the writer with insider knowledge.

Chapter 2 on the cold joke is once again confused about the role of the joke in Naipaul's work. On the one hand, it allows Naipaulian arguments about race, colonialism, and culture (the authorial is collapsed into the biographical) "that would encounter significant resistance if they were put directly" (p. 46), yet there is irony in his comedy through which he is critiquing liberalism.

Chapter 3, on Naipaul's use of the figure of Michael Abdul Malik in both fiction and journalism, makes Coovadia embody Bhabhaesque mimicry in his distortions of the facts of the Malik case. While Bhabha makes the claim of a certain kind of politics in writers who embody mimicry, it is not clear in Bhabha or Coovadia how Naipaul represents this politics. If all the changes amount to an ironic reading, what is the ironic reading of? Apart from a deeply offensive misogyny in his construction of the character Jane and her rape and death – something Coovadia appears to have no problem with but sees as a just critique of liberal stupidity – there seems to be no real argument about what Naipaul is doing with the story in *The Guerillas*.

Chapter 4 is rather alarmingly titled "V.S. Naipaul and the Muslims" as though Muslims were one homogeneous category – something Coovadia himself accuses Naipaul of in the course of the chapter. He also says that it is too simple to reduce representations of Islam in Naipaul's novels to the explicit assessments offered in the travel narratives. Yet he does just that himself. In any case, an outdated belief in the necessary complexity of literary writing as opposed to travel writing plagues Coovadia. More importantly, the point of this chapter remains vague. The argument seems to be that Naipaul is more sympathetic in his portrayal of Muslim characters in the novels than in the travelogues. But why is Coovadia looking for sympathy when he's made a claim for Naipaul's unapologetic and unrelenting strategy of assertion?

The last two chapters are deeply dissatisfying accounts of representations of South Africa in Naipaul's novels and India in the three travel books on the subcontinent. Coovadia's earlier argument about Naipaul's critique of liberal opinion is offered as the reason for Naipaul's mockery of anti-apartheid South Africans, and his general endorsement of the apartheid regime is seen to be offering a stable framework of European authority (once again, examples of this come from biography as much as from the texts themselves). No account of form really informs this chapter at all.

While the last chapter makes some half-hearted claims about repetition and detailed observation, it offers a six-and-a-half page analysis of three books that does not even understand the books' politics. Coovadia sees the third one, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, as engaging sympathetically with Third World societies and biographies, but in fact it is a rightwing book that endorses the poisonous Hindu nationalism that wreaked havoc in India.

Coovadia's book is repetitive: entire footnotes are repeated (Chapter 1, note 29 is Chapter 2, note 8), footnote material is repeated verbatim in the main text, and sloppy editing and proofing does not help. Coovadia is too overwhelmed by the need to be an apologist for Naipaul's politics to work on an account of Naipaul's style. *Authority and Authorship in V. S. Naipaul* does not offer a satisfactory account of either term in the title.

Typo/Topo/Poétique sur Frankétienne. JEAN JONASSAINT. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008. 374 pp. (Paper €21.00)

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Frankétienne is one of the Caribbean's greatest living artists: author, poet, playwright, musician, and painter, he has remained in Haiti, stubbornly outliving the Duvalier dictatorships and refusing exile, even as many of his contemporaries fled the stricken nation in the 1960s and 1970s. Writing and publishing in both Creole and French, and with a broad audience in Haiti, Frankétienne is, as Aimé Césaire apparently styled him, "Monsieur Haiti." In the mid- to late-1960s, Frankétienne founded with Jean-Claude Fignolé and René Philoctète the literary movement known as Spiralism, which took the spiral as a guiding aesthetic principle and an element of nature, history, time, being, and creation that embodies the tension between the insular and the global that courses through their work. One consequence of Frankétienne's refusal to leave Haiti has been that he and his work have not to date been given due general recognition or scholarly attention. This glaring critical gap has begun to be filled, with the publication of monographs by Rachel Douglas (*Frankétienne and Rewriting*, 2009) and Kaiama L. Glover (*Haiti Unbound*, 2010), and with Jean Jonassaint's ongoing project of giving his work the kind of rigorous scholarly engagement that it cries out for. Indeed, Jonassaint's edited special issue of the journal *Dérives* ("Frankétienne: écrivain haïtien," 1987) was the first sustained attempt to engage critically with Frankétienne's work. Jonassaint's present volume complements a special issue of *Journal of Haitian Studies* that he edited in 2008, and constitutes a further, most welcome and necessary contribution to Frankétienne studies.

This is, however, no ordinary scholarly volume. The collection contains a strikingly broad array of material, ranging from conventional critical analyses to personal testimonies (written by Frankétienne's close family, friends, and collaborators), a historical document from the end of the Duvalier period, an interview, the facsimile of a typescript of some of Frankétienne's work, notes on his complicated publication history, and an annotated bibliography. The book is at once a treasure trove for Frankétienne enthusiasts and a useful critical starting point for the uninitiated.

The first section contains scholarly essays (subdivided into Haitian-American, American, European, and Japanese readings) on the literary and dramatic works, each one an important contribution to the understanding of Frankétienne's work in all its voluminous diversity. Marie-Denise Shelton discusses his representation of femininity, arguing that among Haitian writers Frankétienne presents female figures in an idiosyncratic way. Hesitating to style him a "*phallocrate incurable*" (p. 34), Shelton nonetheless finds that women remain "*énigme[s] indéchiffrable[s]*" in his work (p. 34). Daniel Desormeaux writes on *Mur à crever*, noting in particular the importance of the dictionary to Frankétienne's works, as much in excavating the obscure sources of words as in the conception of the books themselves as "*véritable[s] dictionnaire[s] où seul l'ordre des mots est perdu*" (p. 48). For Desormeaux, as for many of the other contributors, one cannot comprehend Haitian literature without understanding Frankétienne, his subversive textual practices, and his ideas on reading and writing.

Jean Norgaïsse moves away from strictly literary and linguistic criticism, and, finding in key works a "*sentiment d'inquiétude*" (p. 57), undertakes a study of Frankétienne's explicit and implicit treatment of thorny socio-political issues. The troubling socio-political reality of Haiti is never far from the surface, and indeed is seen by Norgaïsse as a major influence on Frankétienne's literary style. Frankétienne's dramatic work, and in particular his practice of playing his own characters on stage, is the focus of Alvina Ruprecht's chapter, which finds in the plays a permanent struggle between the artist and those who fear the power he exercises on his audience (p. 79). Alessandra Benedicty undertakes a formal analysis of the narrative structure of the novels *Dézaï* and *Les Affres d'un défi*, skillfully delineating the transformations of the meanings attached to the pronoun "*nous*." Yves Chemla's essay highlights the autobiographical or "intimate" elements in Frankétienne's work, taking the notion of the spiral itself as a means of mapping the movement in the works toward the interior world of the artist. Haitian language, and its literary rendering by Frankétienne, is the focus of Rafael Lucas's chapter, which considers his treatment of the popular language to be a kind of "*révolution*" (p. 123). Kunio Tsunekawa recounts his encounters with Frankétienne in Port-au-Prince, Paris, Tokyo, and Kyoto and offers an original perspective on the reception of his work abroad. Perhaps the most fascinating of all the con-

tributions are the intimate accounts provided by Frankétienne's wife, Marie Andrée Manuel Étienne and his younger brother, Marc-Yves Volcy. These rare insights into the private life of the artist complement well the scholarly analyses, and give a sense of the everyday reality behind the man's complex works. Living with Frankétienne, says his wife, is never easy; that kind of life is not "*un long fleuve tranquille*" (p. 171). Working as his reader and typist, she has a particularly intimate relationship with both the work and the man. Her brief account, and that of Volcy, are valuable additions to this important publication on Frankétienne and his singular genius.

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Although creole languages are spoken as a mother tongue by millions, they have only rarely had a role in formal education. But the situation is beginning to change, as demonstrated by this ground-breaking volume. In the introduction, the editors summarize the historical, social, and political reasons for the neglect of creoles in education, most importantly the negative attitudes toward these languages. Then they present an overview of existing educational programs that do involve creoles, and propose a "roadmap" for developing others.

The eleven chapters that follow examine efforts to incorporate creoles into formal education in eleven locations. Each chapter presents detailed background information about a particular creole and the history of its use in

education, including teacher training. In some places, such as the Philippines, the creole was used more widely in formal education in the past than it is today – e.g. as the language for teaching initial literacy. In others, such as Hawai‘i, the creole has never had any official role.

Christina Higgins describes the efforts of Da Pidgin Coup, an advocacy group for Hawai‘i Creole, locally known as Pidgin. The group strives to raise critical language awareness about Pidgin among educators and society at large. The group’s projects include the development of a graduate certificate in Pidgin and Creole Studies at the University of Hawai‘i, workshops in schools, and community outreach.

Eeva Sippola gives an account of educational projects involving varieties of Chabacano (Philippine Creole Spanish). In Cavite City (near Manila), small-scale extracurricular projects promote revitalization of the language. In Cotabato City and Zamboanga (in the south), Chabacano is still widely spoken at home, but projects are concerned with the development of language materials aimed at local university students or at non-speakers who want to learn the language.

Guadeloupe and French Guiana follow the metropolitan educational system, with French as the educational language. However, the local French Creole can be studied as a subject as part of the national program *Langues et Cultures Régionales* (LCR). Mirna Bolus describes the current use of Guadeloupe Creole in the LCR program and its many problems, including lack of promotion in schools, low student numbers, and lack of an official curriculum and teaching materials. In French Guiana, as reported by Bettina Migge and Isabelle Léglise, Guianese Creole as an LCR subject is well established at the primary level, but is more about cultural heritage than developing the linguistic capacities of the students. The authors also describe two other current projects: one to promote teaching of local language and culture at the community level, and another to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity among both teachers and students.

Creoles in several other locations are actually used to a limited extent as the medium of instruction and vehicle for learning initial literacy. Arja Koskinen describes a pilot program in Nicaragua which began in five schools on the Caribbean Coast as a result of the Regional Autonomous Education System. The local English-lexified Kriol is initially the language of instruction and Spanish and English are taught as second languages. Ronald C. Morren reports on an experimental “trilingual” program in the Caribbean islands of San Andrés, Providence, and Santa Catalina, which are part of Colombia. Islander Creole English is initially used as the medium of instruction, with English and Spanish introduced later. Another pilot project in the Caribbean region is discussed by Karen Carpenter and Hubert Devonish: the Bilingual Education Program in Jamaica, using Jamaican Creole and English in three primary schools.

Another French-lexified creole, Kwéyòl, is spoken in St. Lucia, where the language of education is English. Hazel Simmons-McDonald reviews a model presented in earlier publications for using Kwéyòl as a language of instruction, and the results of a preliminary study. Funding has been received for a larger project to write teaching materials and survey attitudes.

Evaluations of these pilot and preliminary projects all show that using the creole as the initial educational language has several benefits, including easier and quicker acquisition of literacy, more positive attitudes toward the creole among students and teachers, and, unexpectedly for many educators, better performance in the main language of education (English or Spanish).

However, more established bilingual programs are not without problems. Jo-Anne S. Ferreira describes a program that has existed since the 1980s in northeastern Brazil among two Amerindian groups, the Karipúna and Galibi-Marwono who speak Kheuól (Amazonian French Creole). This is a three-year transitional program in which children learn initial literacy in the creole but then shift to Portuguese, the main educational language. But as a transitional program among a linguistic minority, it seems to be promoting language shift rather than maintenance.

In contrast, Papiamentu, the Spanish/Portuguese-lexified creole of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao is spoken by the vast majority of the population. Yet, as described by Marta Dijkhoff and Joyce Pereira, until the 1990s virtually all formal education was in the former colonial language, Dutch. Since then, Papiamentu has been frequently adopted as the medium of instruction. However, there is still a great deal of controversy about Papiamentu versus Dutch, and the situation is in continual flux.

Cape Verdean Creole (Portuguese-lexified, also known as Kriolu) is also the majority language of Cape Verde. Yet despite recent progress in developing orthographic conventions for the language and surveys showing support for its use in education, as reported by Marlyse Baptista, Inês Brito, and Saídu Bangura, the former colonial language, Portuguese, remains as the sole language of education.

The volume is nicely presented with a useful index and comprehensive bibliography. All the contributions are cohesively and clearly written. One small error is that in the maps on pages 17 and 19, Australian “Krio” should be “Kriol.” But overall, this book is highly recommended, not only as a valuable resource for educators in creole contexts, but also as an informative social history of eleven different creoles and of the educational language policies that affect their speakers.

Material Culture in Anglo-America: Regional Identity and Urbanity in the Tidewater, Lowcountry, and Caribbean. DAVID S. SHIELDS (ed.). Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009. viii + 362 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.95)

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In 2002 David S. Shields invited a transatlantic, interdisciplinary group of scholars to consider the question, "Can region be found in material culture?" The results were presented at the program in the South Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World of the College of Charleston and are now collected in this volume of relatively brief, illustrated essays. Each of the sixteen authors uses material culture to ask questions about local influence, regional identity, or relationship to metropole. The subjects are as small as the shards of a colonoware pot, as large as a city plan, as concrete as the walls of a building and as abstract as a dissenting theology. The contributors come from academia, museums, and cultural resource management, in fields as diverse as archaeology, architectural history, art history, history, and English. Some make new arguments about the precedence, timing, or meaning of the material evidence in a particular place; others attempt to synthesize existing work.

About half of the essays rely on the author's own recent or on-going fieldwork in architectural research or archaeology, while the others pull together primary and secondary sources. Many represent new forays into questions of region and the spread of culture; one of the strengths of this collection is that the combined essays, illustrations, and notes provide a useful directory of recent archaeological finds, reports from the "gray literature" of research departments or cultural resource firms, or articles or books from the specialized corners of material culture or regional research. This newness is, however, also a liability; some of these articles feel like the first round of hypothesis and interpretation and will benefit from aging.

Readers of the *New West Indian Guide* will find a number of essays that, in whole or in part, directly address the culture of the Caribbean. The top tier of these present mature arguments, explain their terms and method clearly, and could satisfy both the specialist and non-specialist reader. Matthew Mulcahy's

1. Susan Kern is married to Carl R. Lounsbury, one of the essayists in the book under review.

"Building for Disaster: Hurricanes and the Built Environments in South Carolina and the British West Indies" works from documentary evidence and pulls together memorable accounts of how people from English climates denied, resisted, or adapted their plantation buildings to seasonal storms. In "Rituals of Rulership: The Material Culture of West Indian Politics," Natalie Zacek expertly uses material and historical evidence to explore how immigrants to the West Indies embraced and adapted symbols of authority to their peculiar societal structures. In "Charlestown to Charleston: Urban and Plantation Connections in an Atlantic Setting," Roger H. Leech proposes that the way in which people used their towns and plantations – rather than what construction materials or forms they chose – may be the best way to explain similarities and differences between various colonial locations. "The Archaeological Signature of Eighteenth-Century Charleston," by Martha A. Zierden, presents a comparative approach to looking at the artifacts of colonial Charleston and sees a diverse, cosmopolitan assemblage that reflects the dynamic systems of Britain's global trade, Caribbean connections, plantation culture, and inland commerce with Native Americans. Her carefully delineated periodization and evidence should be a model for archaeologists who want non-specialists to understand their important findings.

A second tier of essays with a Caribbean focus will appeal more to readers with a specific interest in architectural or archaeological evidence. In "The Diversity of Countries: Anglican Churches in Virginia, South Carolina, and Jamaica," Louis Nelson offers a counterpoint to previous formalist analysis of church buildings and shows how local political and social interests affected building design. "Colonial Castles: The Architecture of Social Control," by Eric Klingelhofer, asks more questions than he answers about the nature of fortified domestic and public buildings in the greater British Atlantic world, but his notes reveal a rich catalog of recent and on-going research on colonial sites that hopefully will yield more answers. In "L'Heritage on the Monocacy Battlefield, Frederick, Maryland," Paula Stoner Reed has marshaled intriguing details about the flight of the Vincendiere family and their slaves from Saint-Domingue to Maryland during the tumult of the 1790s. Her rich architectural detail would be well served by another round of interpretation to explore the meaning of the choices made by the Vincendieres when they constructed their houses.

Other contributors propose ways of redefining cultural boundaries, measuring the permeability of perceived boundaries, or finding fruitful means of comparative inquiry that have no direct references to the West Indies. Paul E. Hoffman questions the ways in which the buildings and ceramics of early St. Augustine represent creolized cultural traditions. Several contributors write broadly conceived, clearly argued essays that explain their time, place, and material through engaging inquiry: Carl R. Lounsbury on Christ Church, Savannah; Jeffrey H. Richards on a South Carolina meeting house; Bernard L. Herman on poetics, and Maurie D. McInnis on Raphaëlle Peales's

Still Life with Oranges. R.C. Nash presents a rigorous index and analysis of Charleston probate inventories that enables comparisons across the North American colonies and to Great Britain. Essays by Benjamin L. Carp and Emma Hart on Charleston and Laura Croghan Kamoie on Washington D.C., explore new models to explain those domestic and urban landscapes.

One encouraging note is that no essay in this collection about Anglo America prompts asking: "And what about slavery?" All the essayists consider their topic as fully a product of the slave society in which it formed. While there is no essay here that is written from a slave or Indian point of view, the reigning expectation is that colonial culture reflected the contributions of diverse peoples.

In the best of all possible worlds, essays in a book like this would include the contributors' discussion of how their own findings, methods, or analyses challenge, contradict, or confirm the other studies in the collection. This book would have been well served by intermediary editorial remarks that put the essays in conversation with each other. Readers are left to do that and, as editor Shields invites us, to imagine the potential for the next generation of articles and books that the inquiries begun here will produce.

Tibes: People, Power, and Ritual at the Center of the Cosmos. L. ANTONIO CURET & LISA M. STRINGER (eds.). Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010. xvi + 329 pp. (Paper US\$ 34.95)

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The ceremonial center of Tibes in southern Puerto Rico holds important insights for our understanding of the processes that led small-scale, egalitarian, village-dwelling horticulturalists in the Greater Antilles to develop politically complex and socially stratified regional chiefdoms. Until relatively recently, Caribbean archaeologists have been more concerned with identifying migration patterns and assigning cultural affiliations to archaeological assemblages than with explicating the local forces that spurred social, political, and economic change in the islands. In *Tibes: People, Power, and Ritual at the Center of the Cosmos*, L. Antonio Curet and Lisa M. Stringer

have assembled a talented group of archaeological specialists to examine evidence for the emergence of social complexity at the site.

The ceremonial center of Tibes contains a number of monumental structures, including plazas, ball courts, and petroglyph-lined causeways. The Plaza de Estrella, a star-shaped stone structure, is one of the dominant and defining features of the site. The layout of Tibes, as well as its liminal position on the ancient Puerto Rican landscape, makes it a spiritually charged site with the potential to shed new light on the cosmology of the pre-Columbian peoples of Puerto Rico. Tibes is significant because it provides some of the earliest evidence for a ceremonial center in the Greater Antilles and some of the best evidence for seeing the transition from small village-organized communities to complex regional networks ruled by kin-based chiefly authorities.

The strength of this edited volume lies in its detailed investigation at the household and settlement level of the site, something lacking in many of the more traditional broad-based culture histories and ecologically oriented studies of the region. Moreover, the archaeological work conducted at Tibes incorporates some of the most rigorous and sophisticated field methods ever employed in Caribbean archaeology. Daniel Welch's chapter on geophysical prospecting, for example, highlights the usefulness of several geophysical techniques for discerning site layout, locating subsurface features, and defining site boundaries.

In the 1970s avocational archaeologists made the initial discovery of Tibes and conducted some of the first archaeological investigations at the site. Two decades later, with the help of local authorities and avocational archaeologists, Curet, along with colleagues Lee A. Newsom and Stringer, initiated controlled archaeological testing and implemented advanced curatorial techniques. The chapters in this book are organized around the examination of specific archaeological datasets. One key question the researchers address is whether Tibes was an occupied or vacant ceremonial center during its zenith. While the evidence is unclear, answering this question will have significant implications for understanding the emergence of complex society in ancient Puerto Rico and the rest of the Greater Antilles.

Newsom's study of paleobotanical remains recovered from Tibes reveals the variety of plant and tree species used at the site for nutritional, technological, and medicinal purposes. Moreover, Newsom identifies the presence of cojobilla, a tree used for making a narcotic snuff, and the plant jagua, used for making black body paints and connects the presence of cojobilla and jagua at Tibes to feasting, shamanistic activities, and other rituals that may have occurred at the site. Susan D. deFrance, Carla S. Hadden, Michelle J. LeFebvre, and Geoffrey DuChemin examine the faunal remains from Tibes and identify the various mammals, birds, fishes, and marine invertebrates consumed at this ceremonial center. The researchers found the remains of guinea pigs, which are not native to the Caribbean and had to have been

transported through the Caribbean islands from the South American mainland. Guinea pigs arrived in Puerto Rico in later pre-Columbian times and, according to the researchers, they may have served ceremonial purposes or been a high-status dietary item reserved only for elites. Jeffery B. Walker's examination of lithic evidence from Tibes highlights the role of women at the site, especially as manioc processors.

Edwin F. Crespo-Torres, who examined human skeletal remains from Tibes in order to construct an osteological profile of those buried at the site, identifies a number of skeletal pathologies, including arthritis and dental caries. The skeletal collection showed little evidence of interpersonal violence, which is consistent with other early human skeletal collections in Puerto Rico. Three individuals showed signs of artificial cranial deformation. William J. Pestle's stable isotope analysis of four skeletons from Tibes showed the breadth of the diet. Discrepancies between the stable isotope study and the faunal evidence led Pestle to conclude that the most important dietary staples may have been eaten offsite, which suggests that Tibes may in fact have been a vacant ceremonial center. Joshua M. Torres's study of the ancient social landscape of southern Puerto Rico helps to highlight the liminal position of Tibes within a broader network of regional communities. Curet and Torres conclude with an excellent synthesis that places the archaeological finding within the broader context of Caribbean cultural development.

The archaeological work at Tibes will no doubt shape our understanding of emerging chiefdoms in the Caribbean. This edited volume is a must read for all Caribbean archaeologists and it will be a welcome addition to any Caribbean archaeology course. It will also be of great interest to archaeologists working on issues of social complexity and the emergence of chiefdoms in other areas of the world.